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THE

Haryana Earth Quake

Amrik Singh.

What has happened in Haryana is in the nature of a political earthquake. One is reminded of 1977 when there was a landslide victory in favour of Janata. Another parallel one can recall was the victory of N.T. Rama Rao in Andhra Pradesh at the end of 1982.

Such convulsions in Indian politics are not unknown. They have taken place in the past with results which cannot be described as equally earthshaking. Immediately after the landslide victory there is a feeling of euphoria. As the government settles down to look after the nitty gritty of daily life and administration, it begins to falter and fumble. It is not only because it has not thought clearly enough about what programmes and policies to adopt. More often the new ruler lack the political will to enforce what they believe in.

Will this happen in the case of Haryana too? One cannot say. Indeed, one hopes not. Chaudhury Devi Lal who masterminded this electoral victory is committed to writing off loans advanced to peasants. He cannot go back on it. To fulfil that promise would mean that Haryana would be left with fewer resources to pursue the path of development. This is a kind of issue, however, which is not likely to bother him, or his colleagues. Quite a few other opposition parties are playing the same populist game, whether it is Andhra Pradesh of Karnataka or West Bengal. No more need be said about this particular issue for the main significance of the verdict in favour of Devi Lal lies in something else.

Against Congress-I

It is a verdict against the Congress-I. Over the years the

Congress-I has played the game of playing Punjab and Haryana against each other and thereby getting political mileage out of it. One has only to read the election speeches delivered by Rajiv Gandhi to see how he chose to make explicit what had been implicit all these years. For instance, he took pride in saying that his party got more allocation of water from the Eradi Commission than even what Haryana had demanded. There are two issues here.

One is his undisguised posture that he wanted Punjab share to be reduced lower than what he had agreed to in his Accord with Sant Longowal. One can legitimately ask: should the Prime Minister go back on his plighted word and, furthermore, should he support one state against another? His job is to hold the scales even. The point at issue is not whose claims deserve to be supported or otherwise. The point at issue is that justice has to be done. That means following the law of the land and taking the interests of each state into account.

Clearly, the Congress-I did not subscribe to a point of view which would uphold justice and the process of development. What it was interested in all these years was to play one state against another because thereby it could strengthen its hold over at least one of them. That this hold has been cast off much to the chagrin of the Congress-I is too evident to be underlined.

The second aspect of this issue is no less important. How did the Congress-I manage to get a higher allocation of water for Haryana? Was it by manipulating the Eradi Commission? If so, what a comment on the judicial system and that particular Commission! It must be one of the most outrageous confessions ever made by a Prime Minister in office. But such is the stuff our political life is made of.

By following the policies that the Congress-I has followed over the years, the country has been led into a situation where Punjab has been in a disturbed state for a long time, where violence and killing have become the order of the day and where unremitting repression appears to have

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Devi Lal, Building the wave.

Crime and No Punishment

Kuldip Nayar

The reason why I am late in commenting on the Misra Commission's report on the killings in the wake of Mrs Indira Gandhi's assassination is that I wanted to have a meeting with Justice Ranganath Misra first. I have been able to meet him, but since he made everything he said off-the-record, I am unable to give his views on what I felt were the sins of omission and commission in the report.

I think it was wrong on the part of the Chief Justice of India to have given him the inquiry. One, Misra had said 'no' when he was first asked; two, he lives next door to the house where Mrs Gandhi was murdered and because of that he could not but have been more affected than most by the trauma of what happened.

Contradictions
Coming to his report, I find it

contradictory, inadequate and evasive on the points which have bothered the Sikhs and others. In his report, Misra rules out any pre-planning of the riots and describes them as "spontaneous". At the same time he says: "...the riotous mobs followed almost a uniform pattern everywhere. They came well armed with iron rods, crow-bars, kerosene in containers, inflammable powder, firearms, apart from lathis and other dangerous weapons".

Again, he says that "on October 31, 1984 itself (the day Mrs Gandhi was assassinated) operations had been undertaken to identify houses owned or occupied by Sikhs". How could there have been no pre-planning when, as he himself admits, there was "a uniform pattern" and that the houses "owned or occupied by Sikhs" had been identified before the riots began?

The inadequacy of the report can be judged from the fact that

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The Urdu Press— on RIOTS a Round up



To an investigator from the English-medium milieu, a sojourn in the world of the Urdu Press comes as a revealing experience. It is a life-world at once at one with and at variance with routinised everyday life.

One begins with the innocent hope that since Urdu is a fully developed language of a part of the people of India, its dailies and weeklies must be accessible in public libraries, educational institutions and leading bazaars of the city; but this hope is thwarted sooner than later by the blank refusal of the librarians and salesmen in these places: Looking for Urdu sir? Go to Old Delhi or Jamia Millia.

The message is clear enough: Urdu is an affair of the Muslims and not any other section of the population. It takes time and some reflection before one takes this message in earnest.

The initial reaction is to ask how come, Urdu, the language of Mirza Ghalib, Mir Taqi Mir, Munshi Prem Chand, Rajinder Singh Bedi and Sahir Ludhianvi is corralled into a pea-sized part of this sprawling capital of India proud of its cultural heritage? Ghalib who recommends the elevation of an honest Brahmin to a status in the Kaaba and prays to Ibne Merriam (Jesus Christ) for healing his ailing soul; and Mir who gave his address as one with a tilak on the forehead and residing in the Hindu temple; and Iqbal who reminds the Ganga to remember him as a votary are luminous stars of our past but are seen as little more than relics of a past dear to only a few.

It is a sad comment on the state of our cultural awareness. One cannot help thinking of late Dr Chutani of Chandigarh Medical Institute who willed that after he dies no other book than *Diwan-e-Ghalib* be recited at the time of last rites. He took care to mark out the portions dearest to his heart. One wonders how the learned doctor would have grieved at this segregation of a language fallen victim to communal politics.

Once the lesson is learnt that it is now a fait accompli one muddles one's way into the life-world of Urdu and finds that it survives though in an etherised form and comes across a vast array of dailies and weeklies, most of them in famished condition with the exception of Inqilab (daily), Faisla (daily), Raushni (daily), Partap (daily) and of course Urdu Blitz (weekly).

THE LONG SHADOW

In the first fortnight of June, the Urdu Press stood in the long shadow of the communal riots which preceded the Id-ul-Fitr this year. This is not to suggest

that the Urdu Press was indifferent to other events of the fortnight; speculations about the next President of the Union of India, air-dropping of supplies to Tamilians in Sri Lanka, the usual election gossip regarding Haryana, and of course the scandals from the film-world did find their place, but the focus of attention remained on the aftermath of communal riots, police killings and administrative acrobatics about the same events.

These three concerns shoot through the editorials and the lead articles of the Urdu press. The most revealing part of the papers with regard to these issues are the letters to the Editor columns of the papers because only there under an assumed or real name are things said relatively more forthrightly. On little reflection one finds a full spectrum from remote concerns (The daily Salaar, Bangalore) to burning rage and clenched teeth (The daily Faisla, New Delhi), with the daily Inqilab, Delhi and the Blitz weekly Bombay, Raushni Srinagar, and daily Indion, Dehli and other places in U.P. placed in the middle. The daily Partap of Delhi stands as a class apart.

RIOTS INELUCTABLE

The vernacular press does not have any independent news-service system, nor do they have a widespread network of their own correspondents. As a result the news content is the same which is to be come across in the English newspapers and weeklies; even the pictures are borrowed from them. yet the vernacular press creates a world peculiar to itself. It is noteworthy that the major premise in the Urdu press is the ineluctability of the communal riots.

With the exception of the daily Inqilab and the weekly Blitz no other paper thought it worth its while to conduct an open forum effort to think of ways and means to save India from this scourge. In contrast to this the English press always premised that the riots are an avoidable evil calling for a concerted effort to stamp it out. Once the riots are seen as ineluctable like famine or bad weather the plane of analysis shifts to a plane different from the English press. It is fault finding which takes precedence when it comes to the vernacular press. Whether one sees it as jaundiced view or down to earth realism remains a matter of predilections.

When it comes to fault finding, divide along communal lines becomes immediately apparent: the Muslim papers accusing the majority communalism and the daily Partap spraying venom at the pampered minorities. The state machinery and administration takes a beating from both, of course for different reasons: the daily Partap ridiculing the impotence of the state, the PAC, and other agencies, not missing a dig at the Shahi Imam and Jathedar Darshan Singh, the acting Jathedar of the Akal Takht. Partap goads the government to wield the gun with greater effect or quit and hand over the states of the Union to M/s Verinder and Narinder, the famed Mahashas of Jalandhar. One wonders if it were not only the Bourbons of France who refused to learn anything from history. In contrast to the English press which sees the danger in the policy of communalise and divide, the vernacular press, with exceptions like Inqilab and Blitz, sees little danger in communalisation. On the

contrary it spins out theories to legitimate communalism in one from or the other.

SECULARISM

Inqilab was distinguished by asking the very relevant question in one of the leading essays in its columns: Is the secular Congress dead? Though overwhelmed by the grief of loss of lives in Maliana and Delhi the author still pins his hopes on a secular India; the hope may be realized by other political forces and parties. The article shows historical awareness unusual in the vernacular press. The same sanity is displayed by the weekly Blitz by the comment; It is Not Riot, it is Self-destruction.

BITTERNESS

The worst dependency, despair and anger peep out of the letters to the editors. The readers write: Whom do the peace marches try to fool? Whose country people are talking of? Muslims have no option but to fight it out? Why the Hindu is at the receiving end everywhere? The array is formidable and makes once hair stand on end when translated into the magatons of communal hatred being expressed in these columns.

In terms of magnitude of communal hatred the daily Partap retains its old trophy. The partap urges Rajiv to wear pants or quit, and castigates the weak handling of Meerut and Delhi riots and of course other minorities. The Partap does not hesitate to quote the same couplet twice on the same page:

Nah Uthey ga in se tiro khangr
yeh bazoo hamare azmaye hooey hain.

One can only pray for the survival of sanity which is the silver-line on the dark clouds made darker by the vernacular press.

Towards a Solution of Punjab Problem

Restructuring of Punjab Economy—I

Diversifying Agriculture

It is time for a rational dialogue on the socio-economic causes of the present crisis in Punjab and a consensus built up on the policy initiatives and directions needed to root out those causes. This paper by B.M. Bhatia, a leading economist, is an attempt at starting such a dialogue. It is written in response to the call given by the meeting of 50 concerned citizens "held on 15 January this year in Delhi, which made a fervent appeal for creation of conditions favourable to the initiation of a dialogue and the implementation of measures calculated to restore credibility, confidence, community relations and the political process".

Once the immediate political issue are out of way, it is felt a constructive programme should be launched on a priority basis to diversify and restructure Punjab economy. That was necessary to meet the problem of "poverty of opportunities" which has given rise to a feeling of frustration among the rich peasantry and revolt among the unemployed educated youth.

Run Out of Steam

The feeling of frustration among the rich peasantry arises out of the fact that the green revolution has run out of steam in the state and the peasantry which made good during the last twenty years finds itself at the dead end in the matter of further growth and employment of their energies and capital profitably. Green revolution was essentially wheat and rice revolution. Following the introduction of high yielding variety seeds and the new HYV—Fertilizers technology together with generous supply of irrigation water from the major and medium irrigation works, the Punjab farmer took almost exclusively to the production of these two grains crops. Agriculture in the State got concentrated on these crops because in economic terms the farmer found it most profitable to do so.

That situation has now undergone a radical transformation. Wheat and rice have ceased to be that profitable to grow. The input costs have risen sharply because of rise in the prices of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, quality seeds, diesel pumps, tractors and other agricultural machinery. Wage rates of casual labour employed at the sowing and harvesting time have also gone up steeply. Power and irrigation supply are heavily subsidized. The rise in costs has not been matched by a proportionate rise in prices of these crops. As a result the production of these crops is increasingly becoming nonviable.

This is so when power and irrigation supply to the farmer is heavily subsidized. If economic price were charged for these inputs also, the farmer would be faced with a ruinous position. The answer to the farmer's problem in this regard does not lie in giving higher support/procurement prices for these crops. Demand-supply balance in respect of these two grain in India as in the rest of world except Africa has tilted in the last few years in favour of supply which far exceeds demand. The farmer is faced with a glut situation and but for the support prices offered by the Government, he would find himself in ruinous situation.



Even the present position cannot be maintained for long because the Government with bulging buffer stocks at its hand cannot afford to continue buying supplies from the farmer on an assured price indefinitely. Some downward adjustment of production of wheat and rice is necessary. But that can be effected only if the farmer is offered a viable alternative of growing other crops instead. That calls for reform of farm price policy of the Government on the one hand and development of profitable substitute crops on the other.

Joint committee appointed by the Barnala government to

study the problem of diversification of Punjab agriculture recommended that 20 percent of the area sown under wheat and rice at present, should be diverted to cultivation of sugarcane, fruits, vegetables, cotton oil seeds and pulses. Increased cultivation of sugarcane would be possible if simultaneously the Government of India gives licenses for setting up new sugar factories in the State. That decision has to be taken in the framework of the country's future plan for sugar industry. The question needs early attention at the hands of the Union Industry Ministry and the Planning Commission.

Different Issues

Diversion of area to cultivation of oilseeds and pulses raises a different set of issues. The country is short of supplies in these crops and increased production of these in Punjab would be most welcome. But with the present yield levels in these, the farmer finds their cultivation most unattractive. The important question here is not of relative prices but of relative crop yields.

In the wake of food crisis that the country faced in the early sixties, all attention in agricultural research was concentrated on evolving high yield varieties and controlling crop diseases affecting the two grain crops. Other crops were almost completely neglected with the result that margin in crop yields in wheat and rice on one hand and other crops like oilseeds, coarse grains, gram and pulses on the other widened so much that despite prices of oilseeds and pulses rising to 2 to 3 times that of the two principal cereals, the farmer found it profitable to concentrate almost entirely on the production of latter. The reasons were not far to seek. These grain crops offered him assured remunerative price and ready market. With assured irrigation, the risk element in the production of these crops was practically eliminated.

This has all to change now if the desired change in the cropping pattern of Punjab is to be brought about. Three-directional policy change is required. First, attention of agricultural scientists over the next few years should focus on evolving high yield varieties of

Shift in Cropping Pattern in Punjab (1966-67 to 1980-81)
(Per cent Area Under Crops)

Year	Cereals*	Pulses**	Foodgrains	Oilseeds***	Sugarcane	Potato	Cotton	Fruits and Vegetables
1966-67	50.9	13.4	64.3	6.2	3.0	0.3	8.4	0.8
1967-68	54.1	11.0	65.1	7.8	2.5	0.3	7.7	0.8
1968-69	60.2	7.8	68.0	5.3	3.0	0.3	7.4	0.6
1969-70	60.2	7.9	68.8	5.3	0.3	0.3	7.4	0.8
1970-71	61.9	7.3	69.2	5.2	2.3	0.3	7.0	0.7
1971-72	61.9	6.7	68.6	5.6	1.8	0.8	8.5	0.8
1972-73	61.3	6.4	67.7	5.9	1.7	0.8	8.5	0.8
1972-73	61.3	6.4	67.7	5.9	1.7	0.8	8.5	0.8
1973-74	60.8	7.1	67.9	5.9	1.8	0.4	8.7	0.8
1974-75	61.4	5.6	67.0	6.3	2.1	0.5	9.3	0.8
1975-76	62.2	7.0	69.2	5.0	1.8	0.4	9.3	0.7
1976-77	64.7	6.3	71.0	4.0	1.8	0.5	8.8	0.7
1977-78	63.8	6.1	69.9	4.5	1.8	0.6	9.5	0.8
1978-79	65.6	6.2	71.8	3.5	1.7	0.8	9.5	0.8
1979-80	68.4	4.5	71.8	3.0	1.2	0.6	9.6	0.8
1980-81	66.7	5.1	72.0	3.4	1.1	0.6	9.6	0.8

Source : Statistical Abstracts of Punjab 1974, 1978 and 1981 issues.

* Cereals : Rice, Jowar, Bajra, Maiza, Wheat and Barley

** Pulses : Gram, Mash, Moong and Massar

*** Oilseeds : Groundnut, Rape and Mustard, Sesamum and Linseed.

NEWSHOUND



By Rap

oilseeds and pulses crops. Here Agricultural University Ludhiana which is the premier Agricultural University of the country, can play a leading and catalyst role.

Of course the entire programme is to be fitted into the overall research programme of Indian Council of Agricultural Research which is at present seized of the problem of imbalances in the cropping pattern and regional disparities in agricultural growth in the country. Still, none of the agricultural research institutions in the country is better placed to

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Solution of Punjab Problem

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undertake this branch of research which is of vital importance to the country at present, than the Punjab Agricultural University.

New Technology

There are two other points of crucial importance in this connection. The first is about the technology in use and the second, water consumption in irrigation. The chemical fertilizer technology has become very expensive. There is little prospect of bringing foodgrains within the reach of the poor who remain underfed despite the country having so much surplus stocks of grain with it. This is so because the cost of production of grain per unit under the HYV-Fertilizer technology regime has risen so high that price, if it has to cover that cost has to be kept at a level which the poor cannot afford for securing their full requirements of food. This technology has, therefore, to be changed if food prices are to be brought down and the poor are to be provided access to enough food.

The recent break-through in biotechnology and biofertilizers makes that possible now. Rhizobium culture and blue green algae can replace to a considerable extent the use of chemical fertilizers without sacrificing yields. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research has found that algae can be cultured on his field by the farmer. An invention of Rs 15 can produce 25 kg of nitrogen per hectare which if obtained from chemical fertilizers would cost Rs. 190. Similarly the cost of 500 grams of rhizobium that would produce 60 Kgs of nitrogen is Rs. 20 and the value of nitrogen produced by it would be Rs 280.

A beginning in development and use of this technology has already been made. The Government of India has sanctioned a national project under which one national, 6 regional and 40 subcentres for the production of rhizobium

and blue green algae are to be established. The targets fixed for the project are production of 350 tonnes of rhizobium and 400 tonnes of blue green algae.

These are modest goals. Considering the revolutionary possibilities the biofertilizer technology holds, sights must be set much higher in the matter and larger attention should be devoted to development and far more extensive use of this technology than what is officially envisaged at present. Punjab could play pioneering role in substitution of the costly chemical fertilizer technology by the newly emerging biofertilizer and Nitrogen-fixation from Atmosphere technologies which could effect drastic cut in crop production costs.

Irrigation water

Closely related to this is the need for irrigation water in Punjab. The present projections of the State's future demand for water for irrigational purposes are based on the assumption that the present farm technology would continue. That technology has plenty of irrigation as an essential ingredient for its success.

According to expert estimates at least 30 percent of the water available to Punjab is being wasted, partly through seepage and percolation and partly because of overuse of water. The former is the result of neglecting lining of canals with cement or plastics at the time of constructions to prevent infiltration of water. The latter results from uncontrolled distribution of water from distributary works to fields. All this constitutes not merely loss of precious water resource; even more serious than that is the rise in water table that continuous percolation process causes creating ultimately waterlogging of large areas. The problem of water logging has already assumed serious proportions in south-western parts of the State.

Consumption of Fertilisers in the State (1966-67 to 1980-81) and India (1971-72 to 1979-80)

(In '000' nutrients tonnes)

Year	Nitro-geneous (N)	Phos-Potassic (P ₂ O ₅)	Phatic (K ₂ O)	Total	Per Hectare of gross cropped area	India, per gross (Kg.)	Per Hectare of gross cropped area (Kg.)
1966-67	46	4	1	51	9.86	—	—
1967-68	83	12	4	99	18.19	—	—
1968-69	135	27	10	172	32.53	—	—
1968-69	135	27	10	172	32.53	—	—
1969-70	147	21	6	174	31.64	—	—
1970-71	175	31	7	213	37.51	—	—
1971-72	225	53	12	290	50.66	8.74	—
1972-73	240	66	19	325	54.80	—	—
1973-74	218	68	21	307	50.85	9.01	—
1974-75	189	42	13	244	41.32	9.22	—
1975-76	232	53	10	295	47.16	9.51	—
1976-77	259	93	21	373	59.35	11.22	—
1977-78	331	105	29	465	72.76	24.80	—
1978-79	419	155	29	603	90.96	29.42	—
1979-80	477	179	30	686	104.96	30.40	—
1980-81	526	207	29	762	113.17	—	—

Source : Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 1970, 1978 and 1981 issues, and Indian Agriculture in brief, August 1980.

Area Under High-Yielding Varieties of Seeds in Punjab (1966-67 to 1980-81)
(000, hectares)

Year	Rice		Maize		Bajra		Wheat	
	Area	% to total area under crop	Area	% to total area under crop	Area	% to total area under crop	Area	% to total area under crop
1966-67	4.4	1.5	18	4.1	0.6	0.3	57	3.5
1967-68	17	5.4	29	6.1	51	24.4	621	34.7
1968-69	26	7.5	49	10.0	82	42.5	1194	57.9
1969-70	72	20.0	52	9.7	100	47.0	1502	69.3
1970-71	130	33.3	49	8.8	126	60.8	1589	69.1
1971-72	311	69.1	40	7.3	69	47.1	1695	72.5
1972-73	362	76.1	29	5.2	9	7.0	1890	78.6
1973-74	433	86.8	26	4.6	6	4.0	1970	84.2
1974-75	481	84.5	88	16.8	33	24.4	1956	88.7
1975-76	517	91.2	100	17.3	40	22.0	2195	90.0
1976-77	601	88.3	108	20.1	52	33.8	2376	90.3
1977-78	768	89.7	91	20.4	3	40.5	2447	93.4
1978-79	1001	95.2	—	—	—	—	2600	94.9
1979-80	1076	91.8	71	18.1	21	45.6	2775	98.7
1980-81	1109	93.8	127	33.2	33	47.8	2755	98.0

Source : Statistical Abstracts of Punjab, 1970, 1974, 1978 and 1981 issues.

By preventing percolation of water now flowing in canals by lining them with plastic sheets, not only a huge volume of water would be saved but the damage being caused to the soil by waterlogging would be avoided. Another saving of 20 percent of the present supply of water could be effected through switch over from the chemical fertilizers to biofertilizers in providing nitrogenous nutrients to the soil for crop production. These two measures together could thus save around 50 percent of the present water supply in Punjab for use in expansion of irrigation facilities in the State.

This puts the whole dispute over water-sharing among Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan in an altogether new perspective. Viewed in this way, Punjab's future needs of irrigation water would come out to be far less than the calculations based on the assumption of the present cropping pattern and technology-in-use continuing indefinitely would suggest. Once the cropping pattern is changed in favour of crops that require much less irrigation than wheat and rice and the use of biofertilizers instead of chemical fertilizers becomes common, water requirement estimates of Punjab agriculture would decline appreciably.

This should greatly help in softening sensibilities about sharing of river waters by Punjab with its neighbours, Haryana and Rajasthan. The political gains from a solution of the sensitive water dispute along these lines can hardly be over emphasized. It is important, therefore, that top priority is given at the national level to action aimed at the diversification of cropping pattern in Punjab along the suggested lines, together with technological change directed at substituting to the extent possible, biofertilizers for chemical fertilizers in raising of wheat and rice crops, and effecting maximum saving of water that now goes waste through the use of emerging plasticulture technology and lining of canals and water distributing channels with plastic sheets.

A New Orientation
A new orientation to the country's agricultural policy has long been overdue. New technological and policy thrusts are required to meet the problems of distortions in the cropping pattern, imbalances in

crop production and regional disparities in agricultural growth, that have cropped up in last few years. Reorganization of Punjab agriculture has to form a part of the larger plan of revamping and reorganizing of the agricultural sector of the national economy as a whole.

As other parts of the country start producing more of staple foodgrains, Punjab would increasingly find it difficult to sell its wheat and rice at anything like remunerative prices. It has, therefore, to switch at least a part of its agricultural production to other crops that are more specialized and of high value. Fresh vegetables, horticulture, animal husbandry, dairying, poultry farming, fisheries, piggery, meat production, sheep rearing and wool production are some of lines of development that hold great promise for the Future.

In sum, Punjab agriculture has to move now to a higher stage of development, which is marked by a far more diversified production, intensive cultivation of land, and rich dividend yielding produce. For achieving that, the farmer will have to go to crops and product-mix that combine high yields per hectare of land with high unit-price of the produce raised on the land. A new cropping farm production pattern will have to replace the traditional pattern which has cereal productions at the centre.

This requires looking at the agricultural problems of Punjab in a bold dynamic perspective and taking policy action accordingly. Unfortunately, however, the tendency is still to take a narrow, static view of the situation. The chief concerns of the Punjab Government in regard to agriculture, as the State's draft Annual Plan 1987-88 puts it, are "problems like pests and diseases both old and new, the increasing incidence of weeds, the depletion of soil fertility, micro-nutrient deficiencies and shrinking size of operational holdings."

Of these, depletion of soil fertility and micro-nutrient deficiencies are regarded the most serious. In areas with high irrigation and fertilizer inputs, there are also problems of rise of water table threatening large areas with water logging, and increasing incidence of soil salinity, and erosion. These problems have their origin in the agriculture growth strategy

adopted in the state: heavy irrigation and use of high yielding hybrid seeds and chemical fertilizers. That strategy yielded rich dividends in terms of productivity and production in the short run. But now its long-term consequences have begun to surface and ill-effects have begun to be seriously felt. The growth of agriculture in the State has reached a plateau.

Not only further growth but even sustaining the present level of development has become problematical. On account of intensity of high cost inputs and rise of ICOR, crop production in Punjab is increasingly becoming uncompetitive. This is evidenced by the fact that while yield per hectare in the State in most of the crops is the highest, in terms of money income per hectare the State is ranked sixth in the country after Kerala, J and K, Assam, West Bengal and Manipur. Even this position is made possible because of the favourable support prices that the Centre is giving for wheat and rice. But for this, Punjab agriculture would crash and farmers' income level would come tumbling down. The situation requires more fundamental remedial treatment than cosmetic measure that are being thought of at present.

Exports

The Punjab Government has started showing the right instinct in dealing with the problem. Besides accepting Johl Committee's recommendation regarding diversion of 20 percent of the area now under wheat and rice cultivation to production of vegetables, horticulture, oilseeds and other crops for which there is good market demand, the State government has begun to pay good deal of attention to promoting animal husbandry, cattle breeding, poultry farming, and growth of piggery, sheep rearing, and wool production.

The Annual 1987-88 State Plan mentions all this. Development in these areas has bright future if from the start it is export-oriented. In restructuring Punjab agriculture, this important point must be kept in view so that growth does not get stuck once again because of demand constraint and obsolescence of technology on which it is based. The only way to turn away farming in the

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The Babri Masjid Business What Can be Done?

Maheep Singh

It would be no exaggeration to say that a poisonous atmosphere is being created around the issue of Ram Janam Bhoomi and Babri Masjid. This is not unlike what one witnessed in 1945-47.

Both the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and related organisations and the Babri Masjid Coordination Committee and other Muslim organisations are presenting their claims in provocative language. Whether one likes it or not, this is how it is happening. The recent riots in Meerut, Delhi and elsewhere show that the situation is getting out of hand.

It may be recalled in this connection that the President of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Shri Shiv Nath Katju, has already talked of the possibility of a civil war. As far as the Shahi Imam of Delhi is concerned he has said more than once that unless this issue is settled in the way he wants it settled, the whole country would catch fire.

This language of threats and intimidation has already created tension and led to communal rioting in a number of places and there would be nothing surprising if many more riots take place. The plain fact is that if India is to progress, this kind of communal tension and rioting will hurt the chances of any progress. Peace and amity amongst different communities are a precondition for progress. Anything which works against that objective is therefore bad for the country and against its interest.

HISTORICITY

There is considerable controversy with regard to the historicity of this place. Hard data is difficult to come by. A good deal of whatever is presented is presented from a partial point of view. In fact, one could go further and say that there is a relentless distortion of facts.

One example would suffice. In the *Story of Ram Janma Bhoomi* by Shri Pratap Narayan Misra, it is mentioned on page 91 that Aurangzeb sent his commander, Syed Hasan Ali, with 50,000 soldiers to destroy the *Ram Janma Bhoomi* temple. When this happened, Baba Vaishnav Das mobilised people to face the Mughal army. According to this version, he also wrote a letter to Guru Gobind Singh for help who, it is stated, reached Ayodhya with his troops and defeated the Mughal army and saved *Ram Janma Bhoomi*.

This story reads rather well. In today's atmosphere when Hindu-Sikh relations have been under strain for sometime, the Sikh would feel flattered that such a story is being circulated. In actual fact, however, the whole story is concocted.

It is not mentioned anywhere

in history that Aurangzeb sent one of his commanders with such a large army with the objective of destroying the *Ram Janma Bhoomi* temple. Similarly, there is no reference anywhere in any historical document that Guru Gobind Singh with his troops went to Ayodhya and engaged in a battle.

Nor is there for that matter any historical evidence to prove that Lord Rama was born in this very place or that there was a temple where Babri Masjid stands today or that a mosque was erected after the temple

Ayodhya as the birth-place of Lord Rama.

It is said that Babar, the Mughal Emperor, came to Ayodhya and erected a mosque by destroying the temple there. This, however, is not supported by any historical evidence.

There is no mention of a visit to Ayodhya in *Babarnama*, The autobiography of Babar. Nor does a study of *Babarnama* indicate that he was a bigoted ruler and destroyed idols or insulted the temples. Dr R.S. Shukla in his book, *Sri Ram Janma Bhoomi-Pramanik Itihas* says that Babar had no ill-

In the existing situation the controversy having broken out in the manner it has and with help, direct or indirect, from certain interested quarters, the situation needs to be resolved in such a manner that it does not aggravate the situation. It seems, however, that this is precisely what is happening. In December 1949 the idols were installed there. In keeping with the earlier practice in all such matters, the Court sealed the premises and in a sense froze the situation.

had been destroyed on the orders of Babar or anyone of his lieutenants. Most of whatever is being circulated is either concocted or exaggerated.

Real Issue

The issue is not whether there is historical sanction behind what is stated but what people believe or otherwise. The real issue is that this is what the Hindu believe; more than anything else, it is a question of sentiments. The sentiments of millions of Hindus are involved. For centuries together, whether it is historically correct or otherwise, it has been believed that the township of Ayodhya was the birth place of Lord Rama. There were a large number of temples in this place, and several viharas and monasteries of Buddhists and Yogis. Also, sadhus of several sects had their own akharas.

During the days of Gupta rule this ancient township was renovated and rebuilt. Along with Patliputra this town was given the honour of being the second capital of the Gupta Empire. It is known that the third emperor of this empire, Chandra Gupta II (375 AD. to 413 A.D.), who is popularly known as Emperor Vikramaditya, spent the major part of his life in Ayodhya.

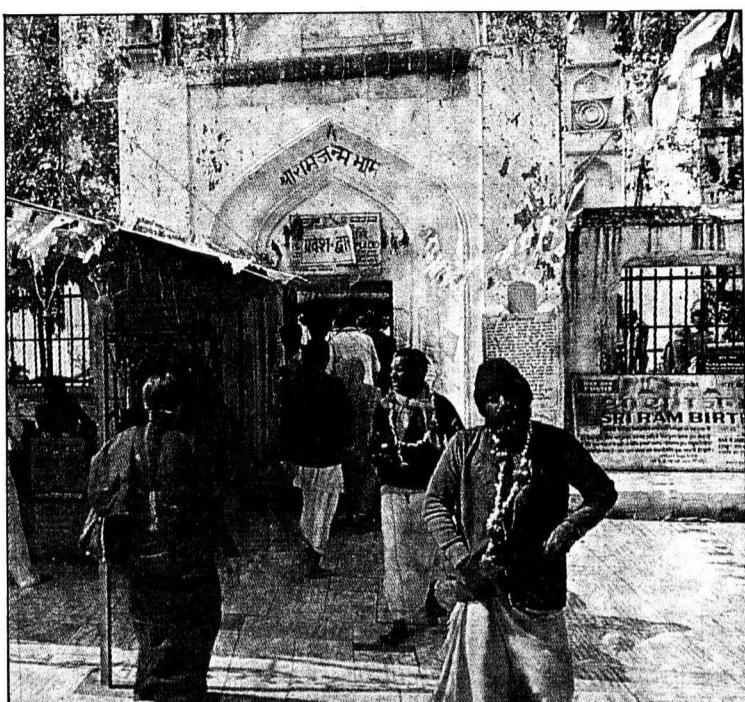
It is generally believed that the big temple on *Ram Janma Bhoomi* was constructed by him. Whether verifiable or not, this much is beyond doubt that in the 4-5th century A.D. the township of Ayodhya on which Gupta emperors bestowed honour and favour, was accepted as the capital of Dasratha, King of Kosala, and a descendant of Ikshvaku lineage. In short, almost the whole country came to accept

feeling for Hindu religion or their places of worship. Even in Ayodhya most people believe that it was not Babar but some other fanatical Muslim *fakirs* who were responsible for the destruction of the temple and the erection of the mosque.

That the place where the Babri Masjid is built now must have been part of an old temple appears to be almost definite. Even today there are two black pillars in the Babri masjid. These pillars, as is generally admitted, belong to the ancient style of Indian architecture.

Attempts to 'Liberate'

The movement to liberate, if one may put it that way, the *Ram Janma Bhoomi* is not a new development. It has been there for quite sometime. There



is historical evidence available to show that more or less from the Mughal days right upto the 19th century, there has been a consistent attempt to liberate the *Ram Janma Bhoomi*. Reference has already been made to the participation of Guru Gobind Singh in one such battle. That, of course, is not correct. But what other attempts were made is difficult to describe because data is scanty.

Of this there is no doubt, however, that efforts to have the *Ram Janma Bhoomi* liberated have been made for a long time. For instance, forty years after the construction of Babri masjid, Akbar granted permission to the Hindus to erect a platform in the courtyard of the mosque and offer Puja. It seems as if his Hindu courtiers like Todar Mal and Birbal persuaded Akbar to agree to this course of action.

Historical Perspective

The controversy of the *Ram Janma Bhoomi* and the Babri Masjid should be seen in this perspective. This controversy has existed for a couple of centuries and today it is at its climax. The present situation might have arisen because of deliberate or accidental action by some people connected with the government and so on. The controversy had, however, existed for a long time and it has erupted into the open once again.



Rising emotions

In the existing situation the controversy having broken out in the manner it has and with help, direct or indirect, from certain interested quarters, the situation needs to be resolved in such a manner that it does not aggravate the situation. It seems, however, that this is precisely what is happening. In December 1949 the idols were installed there. In keeping with the earlier practice in all such matters, the Court sealed the premises and in a sense froze the situation.

On 21.1.1986, however, on an application of Shri Umesh Chander Pandey, a Faizabad Advocate, the District & Sessions Judge, Sri Krishan Mohan Pandey permitted unlocking of the gate which had been sealed for the preceding 37 years. The manner in which all this was done (the unlocking of the gate was recorded by television cameras), leads one to believe that there was more to it than meets the eye. In plain words, a controversy which had been frozen ever since India became independent has now been unfrozen in a calculated manner. This in turn has led to the heightening of tension, communal riots and so on.

Solution

Is there a solution to this problem?

The government has consistently refused to find a solution to it. A number of representations have been made to the government as well as to the Prime Minister, urging some kind of a settlement. No attempt has however been made to come to any such settlement. Most people believe that the government is not interested in one. On the contrary, it is interested in keeping the problem alive and getting political mileage out of it.

This is precisely what had happened in the Punjab. The ruling party almost engineered a crisis which helped it to win the last general election. There are people who believe that the real issue behind this controversy is not the local situation but the next general election. Should this issue remain alive and continue to create tension, nothing could suit the ruling party better than to go to the poll in a situation where it can project itself as a defender of Hindu rights.

Continued to Page 15

Walled City Riots.....

The communal riots that rocked the walled city of old Delhi from May 19 to 24, 1987, were set off by a long and vicious spiral of events and trends that had warped Hindu-Muslim relations for quite some time. What is the background of these riots and what has been the role of politicians, police and Administration? To study these, a fact-finding team sponsored by the Peoples Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) toured the riot-affected areas extensively. The fact-finding team consisted of Sumanta Bannerjee, Gautam Navlakha, G. Lakshmi, Kulbir Singh, Nandita Haksar and Rita Manchanda (all from PUDR). They were assisted by Indar Mohan of PUCL, Manushi and the Concerned Group for Minorities. They say the following with regard to the role of politicians and political parties.

The gradual withdrawal of secular political forces from the social and political scene of the walled city had created a vacuum which is being filled up fast by the increasingly powerful religious fundamentalists of the both the Hindu and Islamic varieties.

Our findings revealed that the changes in the policies of the Congress (I) leadership and in the composition of the party's local cadres in recent times, had to a large extent alienated old Congressmen (both Hindus and Muslims) who at one time wielded considerable influence on the population of the area, and could intervene effectively at times of communal tensions.

We found that the position of Muslim Congressmen in particular was extremely pathetic. Typical is the case of Dr. Khalil Anjuman of Gali Jamunwali in Kalan Mahal, who is a former government officer and is a prominent personality of the area. He told us that his repeated telephone calls to the Congress (I) leaders to stop the dismantling of the 'phatak' in front of his lane, did not yield any results. None of the central Congress (I) Muslim leaders cared to visit the riot-affected area and find out the problems that the residents were facing. Narrating his

experiences with Congress (I) leaders of his community, a frustrated Dr. Anjuman said that they were hesitant to voice the grievances of the Muslims before the party's central leadership. "They are more afraid of Rajiv than 'Khoda' he said. When someone suggested that the present riots could blacken Rajiv's reputation, he exploded "One has to have a clean face to get it blackened" Kalikh un pat parti hai, jinka muh safed ho.

Feeling Letdown

The feeling of being let down by the Congress (I) leaders of their own community was quite widespread among the Muslims of the walled city. While some like Zamiruddin Khan of Kucha Nahar Khan, gave somewhat muffled expression to the feeling, others like Dr. Anjuman were more outspoken. The latter appeared to move to the conclusion that the Congress (I) was becoming a Hindu communal organisation—a feeling shared by both Hindus and Muslims.

We found that a number of Muslim politicians of the walled city who were once with the Congress (I) had left it in recent years and had chosen to join some other party. Mirza Mohammad Osman, an ex-Congressman who is now the

Janata Party Municipal Councillor, squarely blamed the Congress (I) for the riots. He said that the main representatives of the Congress (I) in the area was Swaroop Singh (mentioned in Section III in connection with the Turkman Gate incidents), who was a known 'goonda' in the area. Mirza Siddique Ali, another prominent Muslim leader of the Janata Party felt that there was a deep conspiracy to provoke the Muslims to violent actions so that it helped the Government to prove its theory of destabilization. Syed Hamid Hussain Khizer, another ex-Congressman who is now the Muslim League Municipal Councillor, said: "It is unfortunate that the people who have joined Congress (I) are such that no good Hindu or good Muslim would join the Congress (I) now". He also accused Swaroop Singh of supplying bottles from his godown for use as missiles during riots. "Congress (I) is now like a 'nakli' (adulterated) vanaspati," he said.

Estrangement

The estrangement of traditional Muslim Congressmen from the present Congress (I) is not only because of their growing perception of the Congress (I) as a Hindu communal organisation, but also because of the increasing attraction towards it of anti-social elements. This was evident to us when these Muslim leaders repeatedly drew our attention to the local 'goondas' who were dominating the Party organisation in their areas.

This revulsion against the new breed of Congress (I) men was also shared by old Hindu Congressmen. We met Jawala Prasad of Naya Bans, who is in his late sixties and was at one time a Congressman, but now belongs to no political party.

When asked whether he perceived any change in the functioning of the Congress today, he narrated an experience as an example: "During the riots in 1947, Nehru heard that there were riots at Jamia Millia. He rushed there in his car. Today this does not happen." His son at this point interrupted and came up with a comment that summed up the difference between then and now: "In those days, there were 'jan-priya' (popular) leaders. Now we have bullet-proof leaders."

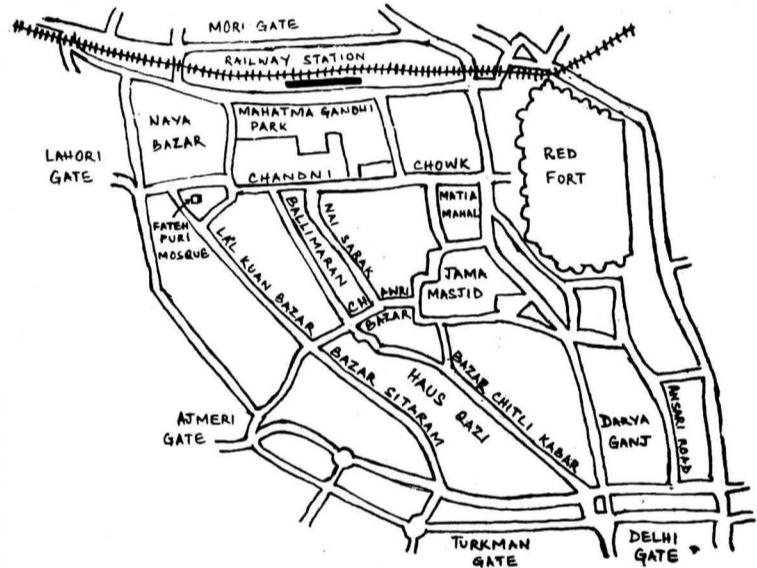
Elderly people like Jawala Prasad still retain the spirit of communal harmony of the past. During the present riots, elders of both the communities of the lane where he lives, got together and decided to prevent any disturbances. Old Jawala Prasad demanded that he be carried on his 'charpoy' to the gate of the lane so that he could guard it.

The Parties

Besides the Congress (I), and the Janata Party, the other major political force represented in the area is the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The BJP member elected to the Delhi Metropolitan Council from the Jama Masjid area is a Muslim—Begum Khurshid Kidwai. But the Muslim residents of the area did not appear to have any confidence in her ability to intervene in their favour. They felt that the religious orientation of the BJP (pro-Hindu) could restrict her capabilities.

BJP leader of the walled city, Vaid Vidyaratna, expressed the view during our interview with him that the riots were preplanned. But he would not elaborate on who planned it, beyond saying that it all started because 'Rajivji got embroiled in factional squabbles.'

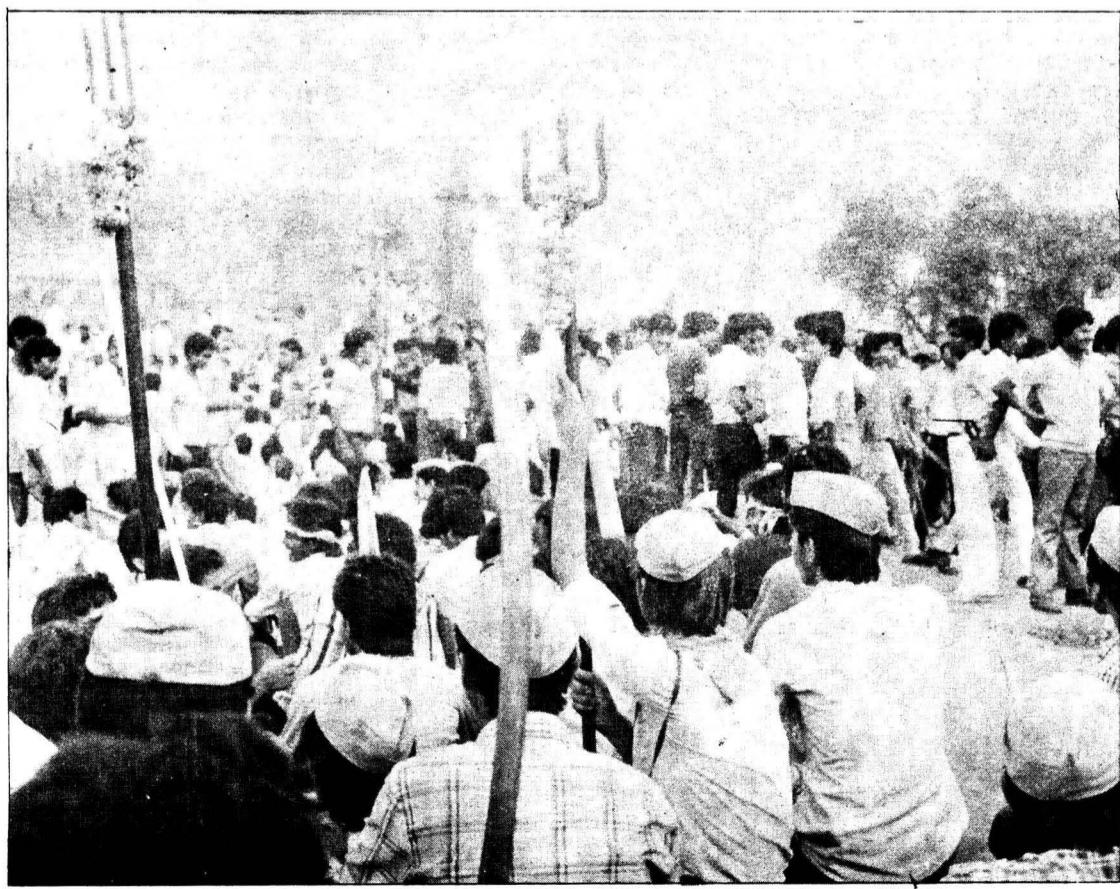
But Vidyaratna's son, Antil, who is an RSS supporter, was



Walled City of Delhi

more explicit in his views. He said that the Muslims were pro-Pakistani, and left that in 1947, Indian politicians should have said that if there were no Hindus in Pakistan, no Muslims should be allowed to live in India. About the recent riots he said that the Muslims wanted to scare away the Hindus from the old Delhi areas and capture them for themselves. His opinions and militance were echoes of the numerous leaflets that were distributed by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad on the eve of the riots.

The first time the BJP came out with a public statement was on May 20 when its leader Madan Lal Khurana said that the riots appeared to be pre-planned, arms stocked in houses were freely used in the riots and that the failure of the Delhi administration and the intelligence agencies were responsible for the riots. We have already referred to the next step of the BJP—its ambiguous role at the meeting with the Lt. Governor the next day (May 21) on the issue of lifting the curfew. (See Section II). After that we find the BJP Delhi unit holding a protest demonstration on May 25 demanding the resignation of



Rising Hindu Militancy

Role of Politicians and Political Parties

the Lt. Governor for his decision to relax curfew on the previous Friday. Led by its Delhi unit president Madan Lal Khurana, the demonstrators originally decided to stage their protest action at the Prime Minister's residence, but they were prevented from going beyond Feroze Shah Road, where about 115 persons courted arrest.

It is significant that on the same day (May 25), several other Hindu organizations like the Bajrang Dal, the Indra Prastha Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the Hindu Manch, the Sanatan Dharam Mahasabha and the Arya Samaj held demonstrations at various places in the capital, voicing the same demand—Resignation of the Lt. Governor for allowing the relaxation of curfew.

It appears that the BJP, for certain reasons, is unwilling or unable to identify the actual sources of the conflagration and the real culprits. It has not yet been able to substantiate its allegation about the stocking of arms in houses.

Left and Secular Forces

We next tried to ascertain the views of left and secular political parties whose members are active to some extent in the walled city. Among them the major parties are the CPI and the CPI(M). A CPI spokesman with whom we talked explained the riots in terms of the increasing number of unemployed people who, he said, formed the anti-social elements in both the Hindus and Muslim communities. About the role of the Congress(I), he felt that it was basically a secular party but sometimes it went "astray." He attributed the causes of the riots to forces interested in breaking up the unity of the country. But when asked to identify those forces, he would not name them. A CPI leaflet released soon after the riots, blamed 'imperialist forces' for helping the communal elements in the country to break up the unity of the country. (An Appeal to the Delhi citizens from the CPI; signed by Prem Sagar Gupta, Secretary, Delhi State Unit, CPI, Delhi; no date given).

The CPI(M) appeared to be less ambiguous in identifying those responsible for the riots. In a press handout released on May 20 (which was not carried

in full by the national newspapers), it attempted to trace the loots as the inflammatory communal propaganda indulged in by the religious fundamentalists in both the communities. It released to the press photostat copies of communal handbills brought out by the Indraprastha Vishwa Hindu Parishad, to which it had earlier drawn attention of the Delhi Administration which, it said, "chose to turn a blind eye." These handbills described the Muslims as unpatriotic and extolled the superiority of a Hindu Raj.

The CPI(M) at the same time, referred in its handout to the 'fatwa' (mandate) issued by the Shahi Imam of the Jama Masjid to keep eating shops closed during the day in the month of Ramzan, and to attempts to forcibly implement the 'fatwa.' (According to information collected by our fact-finding team this was a meeting of Muslim eating-house owners at the Jama Masjid, where they collectively took a decision to keep their shops closed during the Ramzan hours of fasting—a decision which was announced in posters carrying the signatures of the eating-house owners. We request the CPI(M) to verify the matter). The CPI(M) press handout described this as a "direct interference in the rules governing commercial activity in the walled city and other Muslim majority areas." Describing the role of the "two big political parties, viz. the Congress(I) and the BJP", the handout accused the former which controls the administration, of being totally indifferent to the communal menace, and the BJP of trying to encash it for its "opportunistic ends."

Adding Fuel

From an analysis of the role of the major political parties in the recent Delhi riots, it seems that neither the leaders nor the cadres of these parties effectively intervened at any stage to stem the deterioration of communal relations in the walled city. Residents told us again and again about inflammatory speeches and distribution of provocative leaflets by religious fundamentalists on the eve of the outbreak.

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Dubious Role.

But few appeared to be aware of any efforts having been made by secular parties or groups to counteract effects of such communal propaganda. Although the CPI(M) in its press statement claimed to have held street corner meetings and public rallies before the riots, in the lanes and by-lanes that skirt Jama Masjid and Turkman Gate, few residents were aware of such meetings. The CPI spokesman whom we interviewed said that his party could not hold meetings because of the curfew but had distributed leaflets. But we fail to understand why the secular-minded political parties could not organize a peace rally (with the permission of the administrative authorities, through the affected areas on Wednesday and Thursday (May 20 and 21) which were comparatively calm days, and form local peace committees with members of both the communities in vulnerable spots, for the observance of a peaceful Jamat-ul-Vida the next day. At least, we are not aware of any efforts that were made by these political parties in such a direction. And yet, such a preparatory step could have gone a long way in preventing the violent clashes that erupted on Friday.

Delhi Administration

We agree at the same time mere efforts of the political parties could not have been enough to contain the wide spread conflagration. The responsibility of the Delhi administration assumes importance in this context. It allowed for days together, right under its nose, the uninterrupted flow of open communal propaganda which

bred mutual hostilities that were awaiting a small spark to explode into a communal riot. It did not take any action against those who were coming out daily with provocative leaflets which were not clandestine but carried the names of publishers and press.

We were also amazed to find the Delhi administration legitimizing the position of such blatantly communal organizations like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. Among those who were invited to attend the meeting at the Lt. Governor's place on Thursday, May 21, was Yadeswar, a leading member of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

Responsibility

While we do not claim that the above account is an exhaustive analysis of the causes, and a comprehensive record of the events during the Delhi riots of May 19-25, we do assert at the same time that our investigations have thrown light on certain major factors that contributed to the riots and aggravated tensions between the two communities both during and after the riots.

In this connection, we squarely blame the Delhi administration for ignoring the open communal propaganda that had been going on both within and outside the walled city for months together before the riots and for refusing to take firm steps against those indulging in such propaganda among both the communities.

We also hold the Delhi police and CRP responsible for antagonizing the Muslim minorities by discriminating against them and terrorizing them while tackling the riot situation, and later while implementing the curfew. In

this context we would like to draw the attention of all to the warning we sounded in December 1984, in our report on the anti-Sikh riots in Delhi at that time, entitled 'Who Are the Guilty?' Referring to the apathy and hostility of the Delhi administration and police against the Sikhs who were forced to live under a shadow of perpetual suspicion and terror, we warned: "Muslims and Christians fear that a similar outrage can be perpetrated against them also at any provocation."

We find that instead of heeding to this warning and correcting its mistakes, the Delhi administration had remained apathetic towards the rising communal tensions in the walled city, and when the riots broke out the police acted in a way that was definitely hostile against the Muslims.

Alarming Trends

In the course of our investigations we noticed certain alarming trends which have grave political implications for the future of our country in general, and Hindu-Muslim relations in particular. We found that over the years, attitudes on both sides—Hindus and Muslims—had hardened due to several factors. First, among the Muslims there is a feeling of discrimination against them, sometimes overt sometimes subtle, in jobs and education—a feeling that was voiced by many Muslims in the walled city. Refusing to accept such discrimination, a new rising generation of Muslims are becoming increasingly articulate against such behaviour of the majority

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- Minority Rights
- Civil Liberties
- Equality for Women
- Democratic Values
- Environmental Protection

Violence Unlimited

How does one react to incidents of violence like the one which took place in Delhi on the night of 13th June, 1987?

Violence takes place all over the country. Every day there are reports of people being killed in Punjab, Bihar and a dozen other places. Then there are riots like the one which took place in Meerut a fortnight ago so much depends upon where you are located. If violence is perpetrated in one's neighbourhood or in the same town or city, one gets to hear so much more about it than otherwise. In other words, location makes a marked difference to one's responses.

In the modern world, television can bridge the distance. But one wonders if we in India live in the modern world. On the morning of 14th June, 1987, the Doordarshan gave a detailed report about the violence of the preceding night in Delhi. The visuals too illustrated the news in a manner in which they should. But the question that arose in one's mind was: was the same thing done in regard to Meerut. Meerut is just 40 miles away from Delhi and was within the reach of the Doordarshan. But then the presentation of violence and of crime is always selective. The media plays a key role in influencing our perception of things and the electronic media can play a much more decisive role than the print media.

Going further the question arises: what is one to do? If one is politically important, one issues a statement deplored what is happening. If one is not politically important, the statement is either not issued or not published. So much depends upon the people one knows. There is no dearth of paper tigers who exist only in the columns of the media. They say all kinds of things and what they say gets projected without there being much sanction behind what they say. In any case, the point about all such comments is that not all of them are genuine and a few of them are made for the sake of form. But then this is the kind of thing that one does not say in polite society!

What most people do not choose to go into is the bitter truth behind this unlimited violence that is sweeping the country. The fact of the matter is that all this is both an expression and an indictment of the kind of politics which we have been following over the years. When India became independent 40 years ago, it looked as if we were poised to break the existing shackles of poverty and ignorance. But all those hopes have been belied and for about a quarter century now, the Indian polity has been under a severe strain.

Basically this strain flows from the fact that we have been unable to overcome poverty and inequality. There have been striking advances in regard to certain matters. But the lot of the common man has not changed. Approximately half the population, both in the rural and urban areas, lives below the poverty line. As compared to 1947, the percentage might have come down a little, but there has been no significant shift of focus. Unredeemed poverty is and continues to be the lot of the majority.

This factor, more than anything else is what is exerting pressure on the polity. The strategy of development that the country adopted in the early 50's has remained more or less unchanged. As a former member of the Commission once put it graphically when the VII Plan was adopted, "It is the VII version of the I plan". The point about that remark was that the strategy of development had not been changed though it has been clear for sometime that the country is getting nowhere.

When the strategy of development has not been changed and under-development continues to be the ruling characteristic of the Indian economy, how do we deal with pressures from below? The classic answer was given in the 1971 election when the slogan 'Garibi Hatao' was given. It was such a catchy slogan that everybody was taken in by it. Within a few years it became clear that it was easier to talk of removing poverty than to actually remove it. When the problems began to get out of hand, the Emergency was imposed.

It should not be necessary to analyse details any further except to make the point that the final crunch came in the early 80's when the ruling party returned to power. By then the ruling party was left with slogans more than a programme of work. In that situation of political and economic bankruptcy it turned to communalism as a way out. The Punjab situation fell into this ready-made pattern, so to speak and we had the extraordinary spectacle of terrorism being allowed to grow and then dealt a sledgehammer blow through Operation Bluestar and the subsequent developments.

What needs to be understood in all this sequence of developments is that this turn to Indian politics was given because of failures on the economic and political front. Once communalism is unleashed, there is no stopping it. One can count a number of milestones in this descent to the plane of barbarism and mutual destruction. But it should not be necessary to do so.

What is wrong with our way of looking at politics today is that we all get taken in by slogans and do not look at the reality behind them. The ugly reality is that communalism by now has become probably the most dominating part of the political strategy of the ruling party. All other aspects have either become or are in the process of becoming subsidiary to this over-arching design.

Democracy a Challenge

G.S. Sandhu.

The havoc which merciless terror is playing with the life of democracy in our country stares in the face. Every concerned citizen of the beleaguered democracy has to respond to this challenge. One wonders if we are on the same highway along which the democratic experiments in other Third World countries have gone. Pakistan, Bangla Desh, Burma and Indonesia, the list is endless, all started off as democracies but were taken over by military dictators of one brand or the other. This is a lesson which we can ignore only at our peril.

NO ANSWER

Clenched fists and snarled faces are no response to this challenge. Nor does it serve any useful purpose to defame this community or that as the harbingers of disaster. These responses are tribalistic and tribalism is no answer to the challenges of modern times. Provide whatever theoretical justifications you like, they do not conceal the reality that is communalism-and tribalism legitimised by religion.

Human beings hating other human beings because they pray in different places and profess different beliefs is a matter which puts rational human beings to shame, yet this ugly reality is an every day phenomenon. Not only this, it is sought to be elevated into a grand philosophy and aspires to take command of organised social power, that of the state and other voluntary, and not so voluntary, formations. The success of these nefarious designs will spell the end of democracy.

Liberty, the life according to known, settled and fair laws is a blessing which one appreciates best when deprived

Liberty, said Washington long ago, does not descend upon a people; must raise themselves to liberty; it is a blessing which must be earned before it can be enjoyed. To friends and administrators who look upon Washington as a distant and not so-relevant foreigner, I would suggest a walk around Vijay Chowk and read the legend on the entry to the North Block, which bears this message in golden letters.

CRIME AND TERROR

The threat which a law-abiding citizen faces comes from a newly developed union between crime and terror; the former nursed by power-hungry politicians and the latter by ones out of power and anxious to grab power by fair and foul means. The nexus between politics and crime succeeds only for a while but is soon supplanted by war-lordism of one kind or the other.

War-lordism is not triumph of democracy; it is death and disintegration by other and perhaps quicker means. Criminals and gangsters sheltered by the powers that be to teach a lesson to the Sikhs or other dissenting folks do not in fact teach a lesson to their victims who happen to be ill-defended civilians and

therefore fall victims to death and destruction. The lesson which inexorably grows out of it is the further communalisation of the body politic and therefore serves to strengthen those who want to divide and destroy India and the democratic experiment unique to her. In spite of all her imperfections India is a democracy worth strengthening. People cannot be taught lessons by gangsters, ruffians, killers and mafia men. Nor can any authority bring an entire population to their knees. Such a policy, if so it be called, rather strengthens the resolve of those who are denied the blessings of democracy through Black Laws and draconian administrative coercion to fight back. People learn lessons from a Gandhi, a Martin Luther King, a Schwitzer; they resist, and quite often successfully, Rays and Roberios and the PAC. There is only one lesson worthy of democracies i.e. of their own moral strength and perseverance. If that is not learnt, then democracy lives on borrowed time and at the sufferance of bogus messiahs.

The havoc which merciless terror is playing with the life of democracy in our country stares in the face. Every concerned citizen of the beleaguered democracy has to respond to this challenge. One wonders if we are on the same highway along which the democratic experiments in other Third World countries have gone. Pakistan, Bangla Desh, Burma and Indonesia, the list is endless, all started off as democracies but were taken over by military dictators of one brand or the other. This is a lesson which we can ignore only at our peril.

BINKMEN AROUND

A situation of uncertainty and policylessness is a fertile breeding ground for brinkmanship of all kinds and becomes subservient to a vast variety of vested and subversive interests. We have brinkmen amongst and around us in an abundant measure. A prolonged state of indecision, lack of direction and vacillation will encourage these merchants of disaster to an extent which may prove ultimately ruinous. The gain in their strength is bound to be at the cost of democracy. The people of Punjab have already learnt it to their cost. Men at the helm are fond of crying wolf at the slightest pretext, without bothering to ask the sobering question about our solidarity as

a people. We must know who divides whom, along what lines and for what purposes. To communalise politics for short-term electoral gains is the worst disservice which can be done to India and Indian democracy. Yet this is what the netas have got used to for the last decade or so. If this line of action continues the planners of 'divide and destroy' are helped. How and through whom that help is rendered is a topical matter. Was it a foreign hand which went around killing and buring after the assassination of Mrs Indira Ghandi? A total betrayal of democratic values is attested to by the fact that the head of the state and the head of the government have not even cared to distance themselves from this kind of criminalised politics, and a whole host of mini-tyrants have made a profession out of minority-baiting of one kind or the other. Democrats in India must know if some people think that all their geese are swans.

TERROR DASTARDLY

All terror is inhuman, dastardly and destructive. At the same time terror is spectacular and self-perpetuating. No society can have fool-proof policing against occasional terror and the destruction consequent upon it; yet no society can turn a Nelson's eye to terror for long. Nor any government retain legitimacy in the face of terror; it must either win or yield to its alternates. Terror not only kills, it dehumanises the entire milieu; yet it is in some sense a child of this milieu. It is this milieu which democracy attends to and tends with care and vigilance so that the breeding ground and sanctuary for terror shrink to near nothingness.

THE CHALLENGE

It is this milieu which Indian democracy is failing to produce and reproduce for its own success and survival. Accords are arrived at only to be betrayed; promises are made to be broken; policies are announced to remain suspended in mid air for decades. Everywhere the helmsmen dither, and dither indefinitely, leaving the minor sores to become ulcers and negotiable issues into intractable problems. Will democracy get checkmated in this infructuous way or will it soar to new heights under more resolute leaders is a question facing all democrats of this land of eight hundred million Indians.

"A Correction"

The article, Now the Press Joins the Mainstream, by Jyoti Punwani, published in the issue of the Forum was reproduced from 'Adhikar Raksha' (January-March, 1987 issue), a magazine concerned with civil liberties which is published from Bombay (C/o Super Book House, Sind Chambers, Colaba, BOMBAY 400005). We regret that the source was not indicated earlier.

Stable Government Unstable State

Election Outcome in J & K

Balraj Puri

Euphoria over what was called triumph of secular forces in the assembly poll of Jammu and Kashmir State in March last was followed by a controversy over its fairness. In both cases, an assessment of the balance of emerging political forces got neglected.

Such an exercise is not only important but also possible on the basis of available electoral data.

Even a cursory glance over the data reveals vital changes in the political landscape of the State since the last election in 1983. Politics then was polarised between the National Conference and the Congress. The Muslim United Front (M.U.F.), which has now replaced the latter as the main challenger in the Kashmir Valley, was not then born and the Jamaat-i-Islami which sponsored it was a marginal force.

Opposed to Secularism

The MUF proudly proclaims itself to be fundamentalist, rejects the concept of secularism and contested the election on the plank of what it calls Nizam-i-Mustafa. Whatever support it got in the elections thus broadly measures the growth of fundamentalism in the Valley.

In 1983, the Jamaat did not get a single seat and most of its candidates lost their deposits. Its total tally of votes was 6.42 per cent in Kashmir region. In its broad-based front of the MUF it got four seats out of 42 and 32 per cent of the valid votes in the present elections.

In three more constituencies, the Front lost by narrow margins; in Bijbehare by 100 votes, in Wachiy by 122 votes and Shopian by 336 votes. Significantly, the number of rejected votes in these constituencies—1177, 1703 and 1122 respectively—exceeds the margin of victory of the National Conference candidates.

The accord between the two leaders reflected recognition by Farooq of the importance of New Delhi and Jammu in the affairs of the state. The Congress, too, recognised the pivotal position of Farooq in the valley. But the two had represented divergent forces which they could not synthesize or harmonise. The accord could not become an emotive issue on which the alliance sought a referendum. Nor has development with larger flow of central funds ensured by the accord-ever been a dominating election issue anywhere. At no stage in the election campaign the alliance tried to assume a political offensive. The MUF, on the other hand, raised a host of emotive issues with which it maintained its offensive.

Again, the MUF emerged as the main alternative to the ruling NC-Congress alliance in almost the entire valley except in four constituencies of Kupwara district where Abdul Ghani Lone's People's Conference, which stands for larger autonomy of the State, secured the second position. The party which fell out with the Jamaat on the eve of elections, secured about 40 per cent votes in these constituencies, pushing the MUF to the third position with about 17 per cent votes. The ruling alliance was in a clear minority in the district against the combined opposition.

As the National Conference won no seat and as out of independent candidates only one was elected from Chadura constituency, the middle ground of around 15 per cent votes represented by them may shrink if the polarisation between the alliance and the MUF become neater. For the bulk of the 47 per cent opposition vote has an anti-Centre and anti-Congress bias which the MUF has the potentiality to consolidate.

Rigging

Already Lone has offered to make a common cause with it by launching a campaign against "rigging of elections". Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq, who was an ally of the ruling alliance, has lent credibility to their campaign by conceding that "allegations of rigging carry weight".

Whatever be the truth in these allegations, two factors add to their plausibility. First, the electoral history in Kashmir does not inspire confidence. Second, the inordinate delay in declaration of results in constituencies where the MUF was strong or lost by narrow margins, in terms of political impact, plausibility is as important as correctness of allegations. For our present



Kashmiri Muslims, who is to determine their destiny

purpose, it is enough to note that plausibility of electoral allegations have caused another shift of popular support in favour of the MUF.

In calculating potentiality of MUF, its special appeal for the youth must also be taken into account; which is not reflected in election figures as many of them were not voters. But they are not only voters of tomorrow but also militant activists of today.

The MUF occupied some part of the ground of opposition sentiment that the Congress vacated following its alliance with the National Conference. But a far larger ground was made available to it by the National Conference as it abandoned its role as an instrument of Kashmir Muslim protest against the Centre. The protest sentiments had particularly grown up after the way defections were engineered in Farooq's party to install GM Shah as the Chief minister.

The Governor's rule that followed did not enthuse Kashmiri Muslims too long. For, a direct central rule, which initiated some integration measures, including constitutional, was treated as a threat to Kashmiri identity. The MUF was born during that period when Rajiv and Farooq prolonged their negotiations and the later's party suspended its normal role.

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The MUF drew further sustenance from the militant trends in the Muslim politics of the rest of the country. Alienation of Muslims at the national level from the system over issues like personal law and Babri Masjid extended to Kashmir also. The fortress of Kashmiri nationalism, that Sheikh Abdullah had guarded so zealously for over half a century, keeping it immune from the mainstream of the pre and post partition Muslim politics of the sub-continent, started crumbling inter alia, under the impact of integrationist policies. Resultantly, the Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs of the State started getting integrated with their respective counterparts in the rest of the country. The MUF is a measure of the integration process. It shares the enthusiasm of other integration forces in demolishing the entire legacy of Sheikh Abdullah. But that legacy was hardly an election

issue.

The MUF, however, suffered from two inherent weaknesses. Firstly, it projected itself as a party of protest and not as an alternative ruling party. It did not have a credible candidate for Chief Ministership. The alliance, on the other hand, not only contested all the seats of the State assembly but was led by a person whose prospects of reconfirmation as chief minister were taken for granted by the electorate even when any anti-Farooq vote was cast. As people vote to choose not only a legislator but also a government, the advantage of a personality like Farooq to the alliance was obvious.

The other weakness of the MUF was its incapacity to impose a standardised concept of Islam on diversified Muslim communities. In the past, Kashmiri Islam had offered a formidable resistance to the spread of the Jamaat's influence. Its—or the MUF's— influence is still political, for reasons already mentioned, and not ideological. As politico-cultural aspirations of non-Kashmiri Muslims are not exactly similar, it has not been able to cross ethnic and geographical boundaries of Kashmir region. Even within the valley, a non-Kashmir (Pahari) speaking constituency of Uri returned the NC candidate, Mohammad Shaffi, with the largest margin of more than 25,000 votes, over his MUF rival. His clean reputation and reportedly critical attitude toward the accord must have further helped him. Similarly a

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Haryana Earth Quake

Continued from page 1

become the daily staple of life. The question which any one can ask legitimately is: was all this necessary except for the survival of the Congress-I as a political party?

To put it another way. Was it in the interest of the country to have created a situation in which two states got into an adversary position and continued to do so for a number of years, without either state gaining anything in the bargain. Indeed the only gain was to the political party which masterminded this strategy.

What Next?

The question that arises now is: what next? There are people who argue that the massive vote against the Congress-I in Haryana is an assertion of Haryana identity. They are right to a large extent. Ever since Haryana was created, it has been manipulated as a pawn in the hands of the Congress-I to suit its factional and electoral purposes. Now that Haryana has come into her own, it is time to ask the question if the same old tensions are likely to continue. In the short run: Yes; in the long run: No.

In the immediate post-election phase there will be no dearth of people who, acting on the rebound so to speak, would continue to take a somewhat anti-Punjab line. If the issue is handled sensibly, this phase would not continue beyond a few months. Another precondition for it would be and should be the restoration of the democratic process in Punjab. If both the states are governed by those who represent their respective people, they may tangle and tussle with each other but, sooner or later, they will work out a mutually acceptable arrangement.

The Akali grievance is not so much against the Centre which has chosen to deal with it as if the Akalis represent a threat to the unity and integrity of the country. This is not to deny that there are people in their ranks who think and talk like that. But it should never be forgotten that their number was never very large and even today continues to be marginal. This is despite all the calumny and misrepresentation of their position right from the 80's.

It is because of the sustained campaign to depict the Sikhs as anti-national that it became possible to get a disaster like

the Operation Bluestar accepted by the rest of the country. In this massive campaign of disinformation, the Akalis themselves assisted to some extent. But the role of the Central government was decisive and one of its marginal achievements was to blot out the distinction between the Akalis and the Sikhs. When the agitation started the Akalis were only one of the political parties in Punjab. Perhaps they were more representative than the rest but there was a substantial section of opinion which did not go with them. The manner, however, in which the situation was deliberately mishandled led to a situation when the two became virtually indistinguishable from each other.

As far as the Congress-I is concerned, it is still in the same frame of mind. Some people never learn! Given a chance (though Haryana has rebuffed that line of approach decisively) it would still like to persist with that policy. Whether it can continue to do so or not remains to be seen. Were it to be able to continue with it, it would be an unmitigated disaster. No less important, the became of the Haryana verdict would have been as good as altogether ignored.

INDEPENDENT ENTITY

To return to Haryana, however, having freed itself from the deadly embrace of the Congress-I, Haryana is now in a position to stand on her own and function as an independent entity. As a step in that direction, it should cast off the vice-like grip of the earlier two decades and work towards a bilateral relationship with Punjab. One minor gesture of the new approach may be a decision by the new government to adopt Punjabi instead of Telugu as the second language in schools. The decision to teach Telugu was motivated not by any love of a South Indian language, it was motivated by a desire to spite the other state. This is not how a mature people behave. Now that the decks have been cleared for a mature relationship to grow and prosper, it is time to reexamine some assumptions which governed the state of undeclared hostility between the two.

whom Misra has exonerated are not guilty, then who are? After all, 3,000 people were killed in Delhi in 48 hours. One explanation I have got is that the Commission's terms of reference did not include the task of pinpointing responsibility. But while looking into the allegations regarding violence, he could have mentioned the names of those considered responsible; it looks as if he was trying to be too "technical".

The only point Misra can say in defence is that the inquiry was held long after the event. The Government announced six months after the killings; and it was only on July 6, 1985, nine months after the happenings, that the Misra Commission was given a place to start its deliberations. By then much of the evidence had disappeared or been tampered with. Had Misra even taken the government to task, the criticism of his performance would have been less harsh.

Polarisation

The result, as noted in a book on the three-day riots written by Nandita Haksar and Uma Chakravarti, is: "Historical understanding itself is being recast and we are now faced with a situation when heroes like Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru who had not the slightest trace of communal identity are being appropriated by the Sikhs and Hindus respectively. In such an atmosphere there are very serious dangers in using the terms 'Hindus' and 'Sikhs' as if they are economically, politically or culturally homogenous religious communities whereas they have been, and still are, stratified and have different political positions on contemporary events."

Indians. Against this background, it is easy to understand why moderate Sikh leaders have found it hard to keep their following. The former Surjit Singh Barnala government was aware of this.

And in the hope of finding some support, or perhaps to ensure physical survival, several ministers, as has now been revealed, were in touch with the extremists and even giving them regular donations. That is the reason why no popular criticism has been there over the ousting of the government, although the dismissal of an elected government by the centre can rarely be welcomed.

In fact, the Akali Dal's problem is that it has been running with the hare and hunting with the hound. The memorandum submitted to the Sarkaria Commission on the centre-state relations by the Akali government reads in parts like a document submitted by fundamentalists. It says that "the growing dominance of the upper class supra-national forces over the national government and the administration" has created a situation where they have come to "brazenly promote Hindu-Hindu-Hindu chauvinism as their main ideological weapon"; such a plank "would further tighten their grip over the country."

Dead Accord

However ridiculous this is, it does not condone Rajiv

Gandhi's unilateral abrogation of the Punjab accord, which he signed with the late Harchand Singh Longowal with great flourish. Sikh confidence in the central government has lessened. The protest on the second anniversary of Operation Bluestar a few days ago only underlines the hurt of Sikhs. They wonder what is their future in their own country.

N.T. Rama Rao, the Andhra Pradesh chief minister, told me recently at Hyderabad: "We have to win over Sikhs because they are an integral part of our nation". He further said: "The central government committed a mistake when it ordered Operation Bluestar. Let it not commit a blunder by ignoring the sensitivities of Sikhs".

Now fresh negotiations will have to be held with the Sikh community. Even J.F. Ribeiro, the Punjab police chief, has repeatedly said that punitive action is no way out; a political solution is necessary for peace in Punjab. Therefore, some kind of accord is necessary. If and when the old one is renewed it will have to have something more than what had been earlier agreed upon. In any case, the Eradi commission report has made a mockery of the old accord. Several million acres of Punjab will go dry when the share of water to Rajasthan and Haryana is drawn by them.

This does give once again a chance to the Punjabis, Hindus and Sikhs, to close their ranks and fight against the injustice done to the state. Now is the time for the Punjabi Hindus to stand by their Sikh brethren to fight against the Eradi commission award. Apart from other things it may give a proper burial to the monster communalism which has long ravaged the state. And once again, the two communities may revive the Punjabi ethos without which the Punjab problem cannot be solved. This may also give the death blow to terrorism.

Walled City

Continued from page 7

We cannot at this stage venture to suggest ways and means to tackle the wider communal problems that are besetting our nation as a whole, since it is beyond the purview of the present investigation. But on the basis of our findings from the inquiries about the

recent Delhi riots, we propose to make a few recommendations.

What to Do

First, we feel that there must be a sustained campaign by political parties and secular-minded groups, like civil liberties or social welfare organizations, demanding the punishment of the police personnel who are found to be responsible for the killing of innocent people during the riots. This is urgent in view of the common practice among the police to resort to indiscriminate firings whenever there are riots anywhere, leading to the killing of citizens, often children and women, who had nothing to do with the riots. Since they have never been punished for such acts of criminal irresponsibility (barring occasional suspension followed by reinstatement after a certain interval, or transfer to some other police station), they can indulge in these murderous shooting outs with impunity. It is about time that they are made accountable to the public for their actions.

Secondly, we urge the secular forces—political, social and cultural groups—in both the communities, to come together and evolve regular mechanisms for positive intervention in inter-community disputes, and for lessening tensions in the walled city. A vigorous campaign to isolate the religious fundamentalists in both the communities is of vital importance, in this connection. Permanent bodies like peace committees, or 'mohalla' defence squads consisting of both Hindu and Muslim residents could go a long way in preventing the communal elements and anti-social outsiders from disturbing communal harmony. It is important for secular-minded, democratic elements within both the communities to have firm control over such committees or squads so that they do not fall into the hand of the local politicians or gangsters (which we understand from our inquiries, had often been the fate of similar bodies in the past). Given the communalization of the police and administration, the insecure of going to communal organisations, may find an alternative avenue of seeking redress from these local citizens' committees.

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Crime and no Punishment

Continued from page 1

R.S. Sethi, a senior government functionary in Delhi at that time, says that many police officers remained absent from duty under "local politicians' pressure". Misra does not try to find out from the government who exerted this pressure. The commission has no doubt blamed the police for its failure but the bigger failure is that of the government.

Misra's explanation that the communications system broke down is not convincing. There are so many parallel systems, telephone, walkie-talkie and wireless, and all three have various channels. All of them could not have failed. Even

otherwise, could the members and officials of the government have failed to "see and hear" what every citizen saw and heard—the ghastly monster of brutality raging through the city—the horizon red with flames violent crowds roaming the streets?

For whatever reasons, the government has seen to it that the copy of the Misra Commission report is not available in the market. Even a pointed inquiry from the Home Ministry to find out from where the report can be obtained elicits no reply.

Too Technical
Presuming that the persons

Chandigarh Newsletter

RESISTANCE to REPRESSION

(From our Correspondent)

Soon after the President's rule was imposed in Punjab terrorist activity instead of abating increased. According to police sources, this is not unexpected. With pressure being mounted upon them, terrorists have chosen to hit back. If the rate of killings has gone up, they maintain, this was bound to happen. For anyone to think otherwise would be naive. Ribeiro and his men are quite definite that they would succeed but it would take them sometime and at least in the short run there would be no decline but an increase in terrorist activity. This is the point of view put out by the Administration both formally and informally.

Public opinion is, however, getting mobilised against police repression. There have been instances where cases have not been registered and fake encounters have taken place. On June 6, 1987 the Punjab Sikh Lawyers Council (PSLC) staged a demonstration in Chandigarh. Amongst the placards displayed were "Down with Rebeocracy", "Stop fake encounters", "Restore rule of law" etc. They also submitted a memorandum to the Governor. The meeting with the Governor did not turn out to be particularly productive and they decided to approach the President of India.

On June 13, 1987, they held a Convention at Taja Singh Samundri Hall, Amritsar, at the invitation of the Acting Jathedar of the Akal Takht, Prof. Darshan Singh. Over 400 lawyers from various districts of Punjab and nearby states are reported to have participated in this Convention. Amongst the resolutions adopted were

condemnation of the unprecedented depression let loose by the government, rejection of the Eradi Tribunal Award and disapproval of the recent increase of detention from one year to two years under the National Security Act for Punjab only. The Convention also viewed with concern the continued detention of Jodhpur detenus and that of several others in different jails without trial. The Convention further decided to constitute Defence Committees for investigating cases of police encounters and police repression.

New Developments

While most of these recommendations were along expected lines, there were two new developments. One was criticism of late Sant Longowal for having entered into an Accord with the Centre despite his undertaking not to do so. Only a few weeks earlier. For instance, it was pointed out, at a meeting at Anandpur Sahib on July 6, 1985, he had made a public commitment not to enter into an Accord without the complete cooperation of his colleagues. Only eighteen days later he took only some of his colleagues with him and entered into an Accord which, as could have been anticipated, was not implemented.

From this disapproval of the Rajiv-Longowal Accord it was only a short step to the condemnation of the Barnala government. In regard to his dismissal by the Centre the Convention adopted a cold and distant attitude. In the Approach Paper issued on June 13, 1987, it is stated.

The dismissal of the Government indicates that marriages of

convenience do not last long. The collapse of the Centre's unprincipled policy and its fictitious instruments.

The Sikhs can neither afford to gloat over nor resent the event. It provides them with a fresh reminder of the fate of the unprincipled politics and its instruments meet with.

It is difficult to say if those assembled were supporting the Badal group or otherwise. Their criticism of the Rajiv-Longowal Accord points in that direction. But in its proceedings the focus was on unity rather than anything else. If the slogan of unity were to be interpreted as support of one group against another, it would appear to be a reaffirmation of the stand taken by Prof. Darshan Singh in February, 1987, when he called upon the two groups to unite. That did not take place and it led to a breach between him and S.S. Barnala with the subsequent excommunication of the latter. Whether it is a continuation of the same controversy in another form or otherwise remains to be seen.

Considering the large turnout and participation by a fairly representative cross-section of lawyers, the Convention has the potential of becoming the spearhead of resistance to repression. Amongst those who constituted the presidium was G.S. Grewal, who is Chairman of the Punjab and Haryana Bar Council. The head office of the Organisation is located in the District Courts, Ludhiana. But it has also a camp office in the High Court at Chandigarh.

Third Anniversary of Operation Blue Star

Operation Blue Star has turned out to be a watershed in the history of India. This operation was termed as inevitable in the propaganda drive soon after it was carried out. The informed public opinion all over the country and abroad has by now come to a different conclusion. It is considered to be an uncalled for and unfortunate disastrous development which is responsible for creating a chasm between the communities in the country.

In order to re-assess the impact of the Operation on the national life, a public meeting was organised by the Sikh Forum in New Delhi on Friday 5 June.

Dr. Karam Singh Gill former Vice Chancellor Guru Nanak Dev University presided over the meeting. The speakers included Sh. Yagya Dutt Sharma a prominent BJP leader, Sh. Yashwant Sinha General Secretary Janta Party, Sh. Inder Mohan President Delhi unit of PUCL, Prof Jaspal Singh of Akali Dal and Dr. Maheep Singh of the Sikh Forum.

Prof. K.S. Gill, lamented that the Akali government too showed itself to be impervious to the popular feeling and in some respects behaved in quite the same way as the Central government. The Akalis, instead of looking towards the Centre, should have reached

out to the Punjabis. With that strength, they could have achieved their demands.

Prof. Gill, who also made a fervent appeal for release of Jodhpur detenus, found ready support from other speakers.

MASSIVE DISINFORMATION

Mr. Sinha felt that there had been "massive disinformation" in the country on the Punjab issue. He called for sincere efforts, which may have to be spread over decades, to counter the propaganda, that had been unleashed to further the Congress party's electoral interests.

Mr. Yagyadutt Sharma deplored the use of force to resolve social and political problems. He regretted that the government, even after having failed to contain terrorism with 'Operation Bluestar', had not given up the use of force. Repeated statements from the Punjab police and the state governor to the effect that "the government will ensure that there are no excesses" showed a guilty conscience.

The meeting also passed a resolution demanding immediate release of all the internees who had been arrested in the wake of Operation Blue Star and are detained in Jodhpur and other jails. It felt that it was imperative that the after effects of the unfortunate operation be wiped off at the earliest. One sure step in this direction was the release of these detainees without any further loss of time.

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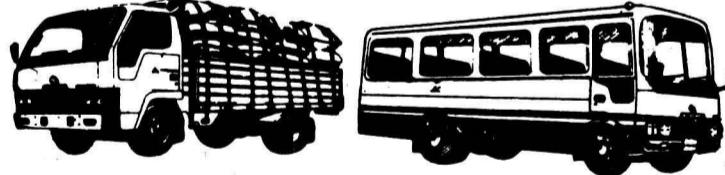
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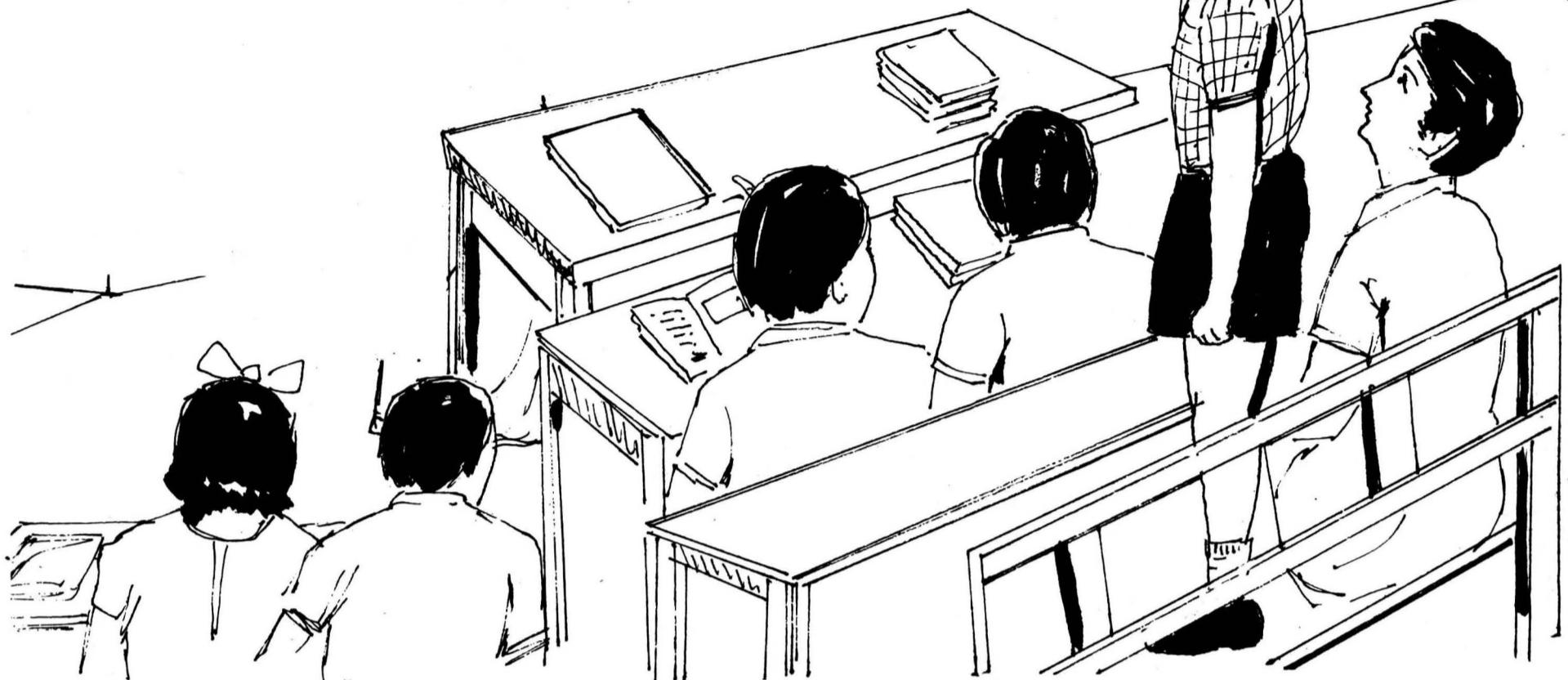
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Dead End

Sukhbir



It was my first occasion to conduct an Inspection of this school.

The inspection lasted for two days. Throughout this period the principal of the school stuck faithfully to my side and went out of his way to arrange everything to suit my convenience and pleasure. Perhaps he was afraid I might put in a bad report for his school; and this fear, if it existed, was undoubtedly related to a time in the past when I had first begun my career as a school teacher in his institution—only for my services to be terminated within a year due to an irksome conflict which arose between us.

My final report, however, turned out to be quite satisfactory. It was as complimentary as the reports the school was accustomed to receiving at the hands of previous inspectors. The principal was almost embarrassingly grateful; I could feel my old image in his mind being promptly replaced by a fresh one; now I was a big-hearted, magnanimous person in his eyes.

Later we relaxed in his office where I sat quietly listening to him as he rambled on about the affairs of his school and sundry other schools in the widespread city, and about the modern educational system in general. Most of his rambling talk, of course, dealt with the subject of his own school the various stages it had passed through; its long, steady history of progress; and of plans for its future. He was quite proud of his school's reputation; it was counted amongst the best three in a city which contained no less than a total of eightytwo schools. This, naturally, conferred upon him the distinction of being one of three

best Principals in the city. He had spent a major portion of his life in the service of this school, thirty-three years to be exact, and now his own life could barely be distinguished apart from the general life of the school.

He talked on. I sat looking closely and attentively at him. He seemed to have aged considerably. More than half of his teeth were missing, and this created some difficulty in his speech. The thought crossed my mind that this school too, like the Principal, had begun to show signs of age... In the old days, as a younger man, the Principal had cut a very impressive figure in his stiff, western-style suits. His way of life, his fastidious habits, his speech and manner in general all reflected the essence of a conservative Englishman. But after the country's independence a complete change had come over him. He had given up wearing his western suits and henceforth went about his duties in coarse, hand-woven clothing which made him look like a welfare worker of some Gandhian retreat.

The Principal was saying, "It has always been my life's ambition to transform this school into an ideal educational institution which would provide its students with proper facilities for an all-round development of their physical, mental and spiritual faculties. This has been the sole purpose of my life. And today I am happy to know that I have succeeded, to some extent, in this venture. You see, there was a time when this school was held in general academic contempt; but now, and for the last several years, it has enjoyed the reputation of being one of the first-grade schools in our fair city. Many of

my former students are now commanding important and influential posts in the outside world. You know Chandrakant, of course?"

"Chandrakant?" I said with a start, and shook my head frowningly.

"He used to study in your class."

"Oh, yes, yes I remember him now!"

"He's just returned from America after qualifying as an engineer over there. He paid me a short visit recently... And you surely remember Shamnath? He has become Managing Director of the Moraka Mills. He too gives a call now and then".

"He wasn't in my class," I remarked. "He was one year ahead. I think it was his third year in the matric. So he has risen to the height of a Director in his father's mill; What else could he have become?"

"And do you remember a girl in your class named Neerja Desai? She later married the son of Seth Mansukhlal, and now has two sons of her own".

I said softly, "I see."

"The ex-Finance Minister of this State is also a former student of our school; he studied here for a year in the third standard. Of course, this was before my time. On one occasion we invited him to grace our Annual Day Function with his presence, and during the course of his speech he paid glowing tributes to the many achievements of this school."

The Principal went on recalling other students from the past.

And many half forgotten names rose to the surface of my mind; many familiar little faces gazed at me out of the mist of the past. In my mind I went back to that time, eight or nine years ago, when I had spent one year as a teacher in this school....

It was my first day in the school. At the commencement of the third period I walked into the ninth standard. As soon as I stepped into the class I felt the students enclosing me in a heavy pin-drop silence. Their curiosity to see the new teacher had got the better of them. I ran my eyes casually over the host of eager young faces and halted at the sight of a student standing erect on his bench in the last row. What kind of a prank is this?" I thought to myself. He was an extremely short lad, almost dwarfish. On his face he wore a pointed little beard in the style of the one made famous by Shivaji.

For a moment I suspected I was being made the butt of an unpleasant joke; but from the general impression of the class I could see that such was not the case. From the snickering way the other students were staring at the bearded lad I realised that, in fact, they were making fun of his appearance.

I was still staring wonderstruck at the bearded little lad; and he too was staring back at me with steady eyes.

At last I said, "who is this boy?"

The monitor of the class jumped to his feet. "Sir, he has been told to stand up on the bench by the class-teacher for the whole day."

"What for?"

"It is his regular punishment. He's a terrible mischief-maker, Sir".

This time I turned and addressed the bearded lad directly, "what's your name?"

"Narayan," he answered. His voice did not have any ring of mischief in it.

"Why are you standing?"

"The class-teacher made me do so."

"Why?"

He lowered his eyes without

any reply.

"He is kept standing like that every day," another piping voice broke in. This was not the monitor's voice; it belonged to a girl whose name, as I was to learn later, was Neerja. Her tone suggested a clear, though unspoken criticism of the teacher's action.

Narayan lifted his head slightly to glance at Neerja, then lowered his face again.

At that moment a boy sitting next to him rose to his feet. He was a tall fellow; his head stuck out higher than Narayan's in spite of the latter's advantage of the bench to support his height. He looked once at Narayan and said, "Sir, he is a devil. Yesterday he threw me into the gutter."

The class broke into laughter. As the general mirth faded away I could hear the giggling peal of Neerja's laughter going on undiminished.

I started at the tall boy. "what?" I gasped at last. "He pushed you?"

"Yes, sir... he did;" And he glanced at Narayan as if telling him to prepare for the worst now.

I could not help smiling. The whole class burst again into laughter.

I asked Narayan, "Did you really push him into the gutter?"

Before replying to my question Narayan turned to stare at the tall boy. "Yes sir. This back-biter lied about me to the class-teacher."

"This long-legged is always running to the teacher with false tales," Neerja put in quickly. The tall boy stared angrily from Narayan to Neerja.

I looked at Narayan with a bemused expression for some time. Then I told him, "Sit down".

The class reacted to my words with amazement.

Narayan made a nervous movement, then remained standing as before.

The monitor was on his feet again, saying, "Sir, he has been specially instructed by the class-teacher to remain standing for all the periods. He's a very."

I stared down at the monitor until he grew uncertain under my gaze and fell silent.

I turned my eyes and once again told Narayan to take his seat. As he climbed down from the bench I said, "Come here".

Narayan walked boldly up to me. His face was a study in arrogance. At that moment he looked a real Shivaji.

When he was up close, I said, "you are a brave-looking lad. You will grow up to be like Shivaji."

Narayan's face lit up with pleasure.

"You may go and take your seat now." I went on. "When we stage a play on our Annual Day you will be given the role of Shivaji. You will really look like him. Do you know anything about acting?"

Before Narayan could reply another boy spoke up, "He is a very fine actor, Sir! He can imitate all the famous actors! He says when he grows up he will be a hero in films!"

"A hero? Him?" jeered the tall boy. "They will make him a clown! Look at his height!"

The monitor opened his mouth to say something, but prudently changed his mind.

Narayan walked triumphantly back to his bench. When he sat down I was taken aback to see that the pointed little beard had disappeared from his face.

During the mid-afternoon recess, while having tea with the other teachers I casually dropped Narayan's name in the general conversation.

An elderly teacher who was sipping tea out of his plate put the plate down on the table and retorted, "You are new here; beware of that boy! He likes to create trouble for his teachers. The first time he played such a dirty April Fool trick on me that I can never forget the incident". He interrupted himself to lift the plate carefully off the table and gulped down the contents in two long swallows. I looked at him and noticed a peculiar way he had of twitching his shoulders every few moments. He put the plate back on the table and gave his shoulders another nervous twitch before he went on, "On the first of April I went to his class. As I pulled upon the drawer of the desk to remove the duster four ugly full-grown frogs jumped out from inside. One of these monsters slid against my face! While I was still recovering from the shock, I heard the voice of this pest of Narayan at the door asking my permission to enter the class. I knew at once he was the culprit who's played this trick on me!"

The other teachers were laughing openly. The elderly teacher began to twitch his shoulders harder. After a short pause he said, "So beware of him! He's a menace!"

I gave my shoulders an answering twitch and said, "You don't have to worry about me."

At that moment another teacher spoke up about Narayan. "The truth is that he

does not wish to study. His heart is set against it. In fact it's only because of his father's insistence that he is here at all. The old man keeps pleading with the teachers to make his son study his lessons. He is himself a watchman, but hopes his son will grow up to be something better in this world. However, I'm afraid his hopes are quite beyond the boy's capabilities."

I was about to say something in Narayan's favour when his class-teacher suddenly broke in, "He is a rowdy! A ruffian! He deserves to be kicked out of the school! I've warned the principal often enough, but the Principal cannot bear to hurt his father's feelings. I've never seen such a hopeless student in all my life!" He paused and turned his face directly to me. "However, you have already permitted him to take his seat. If you had only referred the matter to me before taking such a step...." He left his vague rebuke hanging in the air; then turning his face away he began to sip his tea.

I looked at him through narrowed eyes. He had a low forehead and thinly compressed lips. His face gave an impression of self-contained meanness and his small bright eyes had a look of witless evil in them.

A young-looking teacher seated beside me murmured softly, "In my opinion Narayan is a problem child."

Twitching his shoulders with renewed vigour the elderly teacher interrupted, "Do you take him to be a child? He may look like a child, but he's not less than seventeen or eighteen!"

The young-looking teacher gave him a humourless smile and went on in the same tone, "Such students require special handling. But the problem becomes very complex when such a student comes into the hands of an instructor who is himself a 'problem teacher'. I've been studying this boy from some months. It is surprising to note that he is peculiarly talented in some ways, and it is extremely difficult to believe in some of the opinions held about him by his teachers. Take mathematics, for instance, "he said, his glance revolving towards the maths teacher who seemed quite indifferent to any discussion about Narayan. "It is the maths-teacher's contention that Narayan is a dud in mathematics. The boy avoids doing any sums in the class. He secures zero in his tests. But it is also a fact that Narayan often helps other students to do their

sums. And in the examinations he always passes with flying colours. The truth is that he is a willful and obstinate little fellow, and from the very beginning, for some reasons or other, he has turned against this particular teacher."

The maths teacher turned and spoke stiffly, "Turned against me? For what cause? Just you wait, I'll make him rue the day he was born: He got through his examinations by dint of copying the answers! He's a thief, that's what he is a crook!"

Seated next to him another old teacher plucked at his old fashioned glasses and commented, "He doesn't do his lessons in the class, nor does he ever do his home-work. Personally, I just ignore him. In my drawing periods I have never seen him working at any given task. He busies himself making all sorts of nonsensical sketches of whatever comes into his head. Whenever I enter his class he's always chalked up the black-board with some sketch or cartoon of his classmates."

Narayan's class teacher spoke harshly, "It is soft-hearted teachers like you who have spoiled him by letting him go unpunished for his misdeeds! He should never have been allowed to enter any school!"

I listened quietly to the discussion as it flowed round me. Besides revealing Narayan's ambivalent nature the listless talk also served to reveal to me many meaningful characteristics of the teachers themselves.

Time passes. Gradually the school absorbed me in the folds of its routine; I became just another school teacher. Within a period of two-to three months all my earlier enthusiasm began to cool down. In the beginning I had been on fire to bring about drastic improvements in the school's existing educational methods to give a new, revolutionary mould to the minds of the boys and girls who came to me for instructions. But most of my hopes died a premature death. As long as I served in the school, however, I endeavoured to put my whole-hearted energy behind the task.

Perhaps the school held its one great interest for me in the person of Narayan himself. I was curious to gauge the depths of his ambivalence. What was his reality? What was the essence of the force which flowed out of him so impetuously, taking so many different forms? I encouraged the students to prepare amateur stage-plays, an activity which

gave Narayan an opportunity to show his histrionic talents; he played a variety of roles to perfection. I selected two of his sketches and had them hung in the class-room. One of the sketches was of Shivaji and the other portrayed a flower-vase full of flowers. The flowers struck the eye with their look of dewy freshness.

Later, with the aid of another student, Narayan prepared a large map of India fully illustrated with informative data regarding the climatic regions, degree of rainfall, mountains and plains, mineral deposits, crops found in various regions, and the situation of large towns and cities. I had this map, too, hung up in the class-room.

Once, while referring to this map, Neerja remarked that she had learned more than half of her geography lessons by merely looking at it. At about this time Narayan also wrote a satirical poem containing very apt references about the teachers of the school. The poem was an instant success with the students; the teachers, of course, showed scant appreciation for his effort.

Narayan was up to his neck in some new mischief every day. The style and mode of his dress changed from one day to the next. One day he would turn up in a freshly ironed suit; another day in a worn shirt and short; and on still another day in a dhoti-kurta. On some days he wore regular boots, and at another time he would arrive bare-footed. He even combed his hair in a different fashion from day to day. And one day he turned up with his head as bald as an egg!

It became apparent to me that Narayan would not be able to adapt himself to this school; it did not suit his temperament. But where else could he go? But I, too, found myself unable to adjust to the norms of this school; it did not suit my temperament either. So there came a time when I left the school...

The principal was beaming with pleasure. Happiness oozed out of him; he was laying open his heart to me, unaware of the passage of time. I was listening quietly to his endless talk and going stiff with boredom. I was fed up with him.

I was preparing to rise and take my leave when the Principal exclaimed, "It's almost tea-time! You must have some tea before you go!" Saying this he reached for the bell on his desk.

The sharp tinkling sound of the bell fetched the peon on the double. His quick, springy step attracted my attention. I looked at him; and then stared with startled eyes. Softly as a breath of air his name rushed to my lips, "Narayan!"

He gave a little start and turned slowly towards me as if hesitant to meet my eyes.

The Principal broke in on our silence. "Dont you remember him, Narayan? He used to teach in this school some years ago."

Narayan briefly nodded his head. "Yes.... He used to teach our class". There was infinite sadness in his voice.

I stared at him. My heart was beating as if it would break. I turned my anguished eyes away from him.

Narayan received the order for tea and went out. There was no spring in his step now.

A wave of bitterness passed over me. I had an urge to cry out to the Principal, "A student of this school rose to the position of a Minister; another returned from America as a qualified engineer; a third one managed to be appointed as a Director to some Mill; but there was also a student of this school who has ended up as a mere peon, a student who had the possibilities of rising to so many better things!..."

But I held myself, locked in an agonizing silence. I sat there, gazing far off into some invisible horizon of time, listening to the Principal and waiting for my tea.

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NEWSHOUND



By RAP

Solution of Punjab Problem

Continued from page 4

State from the blind alley it finds itself located at present is to progressively transform it into an active and thriving export business.

To accomplish this requires creation of a number of complementarities. The most needed among these are: (1) Food processing industry; (ii) Agro-based manufacturing industry network; (iii) Refrigeration, cold storage and warehousing facilities for fresh fruits, vegetables, fish, poultry products and other perishable agricultural produce; (iv) development of Collecting Centres at convenient locations in the State for raw and processed produce and opening of agri-FTZ, say near Amritsar or Ludhiana, for promoting exports of farm products; and (v) strengthening of existing transport system by opening a new corridor other than GT-Delhi-Amritsar Railway-Road on Delhi-Ferozepur axis on which Haryana capital could be sited as well.

Food Processing

Development of fruits and vegetables cultivation in the state on a business scale would become possible only if adequate processing, storage and marketing facilities for the products are made available. No worthwhile fruit and vegetable industry can be developed without creating adequate processing facilities. For example, 90 percent of the total grape crop of the world is processed and only 10 percent is consumed fresh. Proportion may vary from case to case but trend everywhere in modern societies is towards consumption of fruits and vegetables in the processed form.

The processing industry has immense scope and a bright future in Punjab. A processing plant set up in Abohar has found that even while operating at full capacity level, it could handle only a fraction of the crops produced in the area. That shows the scope that exists even with the present level of horticultural productions. The development of processing industry and expansion of horticulture could move hand-in-hand in the state over the next decade or two, the development of one reinforcing the growth in the other.

The concept of Command Areas becomes extremely relevant in this context. Johl Committee on Diversification of Agriculture in Punjab has suggested that "good sized processing units with capacity of 150 tonnes per day each, should be established in each district." "These processing plants" the Committee goes on to add, "should enter into contracts with the farmers to produce and supply to the plants specific quantities and qualities of produce over a given period of time as may be required by the plants."

Imbalances between supply of produce and processing could arise if growth of the farm output and processing capacity of plant are un-coordinated. This difficulty may be overcome, to some extent at least, by developing a system whereunder the plant produces, procures and supplies seeds of specific varieties to producers for growing the crop in a staggered manner. By that method, the processing plant could ensure constant flow of supplies of raw produce of uniform quality to it round the year so that it is kept working full time throughout the year.

At the same time, the farmers would be assured of ready market for their produce at predetermined and obviously remunerative prices. That however does not rule out conflict of interests between the plant and farmers in determination of prices that the plant would pay to the producers. This problem is best met by promoting establishment of processing plants on cooperative basis by the farmers themselves on the lines of sugar cooperatives in Maharashtra.

High-tech Industry

Food processing, like other industrial production is increasingly becoming a high-tech industry. Its development requires application of technologies which have to be indigenously developed through a sustained R & D effort or have to be imported from abroad. While it is desirable that attention begins to be given at Agricultural University Ludhiana and other relevant institutions in the State to this kind of research, the Pepsi Cola proposal to develop along with its trade-mark cold drink, the whole range of food processing industry by setting up a joint-venture food processing plant in collaboration with the Punjab Government should be considered far more sympathetically than has been done so far.

That proposal should be viewed not from the narrow angle of the policy on multinationals in this country but from the broader perspective of the advantage of this proposal to the nation in terms of getting a new technology which is of revolutionary potential for not only Punjab agriculture but also for the national economy as a whole. There has been some amount of national debate on the subject but the emphasis of interested parties opposing the proposal has been on the harm that entry of Pepsi-Cola would do to the domestic well-developed cold drink industry. Pepsicola drink production forms only one third of the proposal package, the other two-third consisting of establishing a large scale food processing industry and giving

the relevant technology to India.

When viewed in this broader perspective, the benefits from the proposal to the nation may far out-weigh the costs, in terms of harming, the sectional interests of country's own producers of cold drinks and making an exception in this case of the national policy of discouraging the entry of multinationals into the Indian market. At the top of it are the political dividends that the country may reap, at this critical juncture, from giving a boost to Punjab economy and opening a whole vista of development for it. The project could serve not only as a catalyst in the much needed diversification of Punjab agriculture but also pave the way to industrialization of the State.

Agro-based Industry

Another essential for diversification of cropping pattern in Punjab is development of agro industries in the State. In 1983-84, Punjab produced 7 lakh tonnes of cotton, 5.2 million tonnes of sugarcane and 1.14 lakh tonnes of oil seeds. Sugarcane was used in the State for manufacture of sugar and gur but the larger part of cotton and oilseeds output was exported to other parts of the country, there being not sufficient demand from manufacturing for these raw materials in the State.

It is evident that in planning any major thrust in diversification of cropping pattern in Punjab, development of manufacturing capacity for working up the raw materials into manufactures will have to be given close attention. The scope for that is, of course, limited in as much as newly established units in these industries would find it difficult to compete with well-established enterprises in other parts of the country. That point is well understood and could hardly be disputed.

All that is intended to be conveyed here in this connection is that industries having raw material base have better chance to develop than others and that a programme of diversification of agricultural production will have better chance of success if it is combined with establishment of manufacturing units that provide ready market for alternative crops that producer raises on lands diverted from cultivation of wheat and rice.

Refrigeration, Cold storage etc.

For development, on a meaningful scale, of food processing industry which offers the maximum promise in the state at present, a strong base of infrastructural facilities comprising refrigeration, cold storage and warehousing for both inputs and final products will have to be provided. Without that base, it would not be possible to go far in that direction. The Punjab government could take initiative in promoting the development of such facilities in the public sector or provide financial assistance and fiscal incentives to the private sector for building these facilities.

The very availability of these basic facilities could serve as a catalyst and trigger the growth

of vegetables and fruits production in the state on commercial scale. To begin with the demand for services of this kind of infrastructure is bound to be of a modest order. But going by the experience of countries with highly developed processed food industry, the expansion of these facilities will have to proceed, both in range and size side by side with the development of the industry. This opens up an altogether new vista of opportunities for enterprise.

Agri Free Trade Zone

There is a considerable sized domestic market available for exploitation, both for fresh and processed vegetable and fruit products, to the Punjab farmer. According to the Johl committee Punjab alone would need about 9.5 lakh tonnes of fruits and 2 million tonnes of vegetable by 2000 AD for its population which is projected to grow to 27.4 millions by then. If adequate refrigeration, storage and transport facilities are made available for marketing the produce in other parts of the country, the total demand would be several fold of that.

Still in planning for the growth of horticulture on the scale envisaged here, it will be highly rewarding if an eye is kept on developing an export market from the very onset. In this connection a proposal has been mooted that an agri-Free Trade Zone complex be built near Amritsar. This city has now an airport which can be conveniently raised to international air-port status. The existence of such a facility at hand makes it easier to think of establishing an export centre there for collecting, processing, grading and quality control of farm products to develop an active export trade in them. Given the necessary production and transport

linkages, such a centre or trade zone could lay the foundation for developing a flourishing export trade in vegetables, fruits, flowers, meat, poultry and dairy products that should bring not only valuable foreign exchange earnings to the country but also attractive profits to the farmer and new employment opportunities to the youth in the state. The proposal therefore, offers exciting possibilities in the matter of triggering the process of much needed diversification of Punjab agriculture.

New Road and Rail Links

Another suggestion made in this connection is that a new corridor other than GT-Delhi-Amritsar rail-road link between Delhi and Punjab should be opened on Delhi-Ferozepur axis. Along this trunk route, arterial rail and road links could be built into the interior on both sides of the axis. This would provide additional transport facilities for carrying the State's surplus agricultural produce to other parts of the country. Of late, these facilities have been found to be too inadequate to carry all the produce offered at the harvest time with the result that burdensome stocks have started accumulating with the Food Corporation of India and Punjab Government Civil Supplies Department.

The opening of the new corridor should ease the situation in that regard. But far more important than that are the long-term benefits expected to accrue to the Punjab economy from it. The proposed link could lead to development of new townships, trade centres, and factories of various types all along the two sides of the route and thus add significantly to the growth of the State's net domestic product and employment opportunities.

(To be concluded)



Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) whose 100th birth anniversary is being celebrated all through the country on June 27. He consolidated and built a real secular state in Punjab.

Stable Government

Cont. from page 9

Gujar candidate of the Congress comfortably won from Kangan in which his community is in sizeable number.

Fragmentation in Jammu

If elections in the valley consolidated the electorate into two main polarised camps, they seem to have fragmented the politics of Jammu. The MUF, the principal rival of the ruling alliance, could not cross the Pir Panchal range that divides the two major regions of the State.

Out of ten Muslim majority constituencies of Jammu the alliance won nine. Most of these constituencies are mountainous and far flung where an opposition usually cannot match the resources, organisation and official machinery of the ruling party. Moreover, unlike the valley, there was neither any clear issue nor a single opposition party that could mobilise the voters in the Jammu region. Caste factor, therefore, was strong among the Hindus as well as the Muslims.

The solitary Muslim majority seat that the alliance lost in the border constituency of Poonch, was mainly due to the ethnic factor. An independent Muslim Gujar defeated NC candidate of Kashmiri Muslim origin with the backing of his community and the bulk of the Hindus and the Sikhs. In the other two constituencies of Poonch district as also in two of Rajouri district, party labels hardly mattered. The voters were broadly divided on caste lines viz along Gujar (all Muslims) and non-Gujars (mostly-Muslims) communities.

Thus apart from Poonch, two more Gujars were elected in these districts, one each from the NC and the congress parties primarily on the strength of their communities and only marginally on that of their parties. Two Muslim Rajpur seats were also shared by the two alliance partners. One more Gujar candidate of the NC was elected from Gulabgarh in Udhampur district while the Congress was able to return a Muslim from a predominantly Hindu constituency of Reasi from the same district where Muslims and scheduled castes constitute a majority.

Out of 32 seats of the region, the NC was allocated seven Muslim majority and one scheduled caste seat while the Congress was allocated 21 in Hindu majority area (including the constituency of Reasi) and 3 in Muslim majority areas.

Details

Out of 21 Hindu elected members, 16 belong to the Congress, one (scheduled caste) to its ally the NC 2 to the BJP and 2 are independents. In 1983, all these seats were won by the Congress. Out of the remaining 11 constituencies, the Congress held 3 while the NC had won 8 (all Muslim except one scheduled caste belonging to the NC from Roasi). In 1987, their share is four and six respectively while the latter lost one to an independent (all Muslims).

In 1983, the alliance partners, in competition with each other, had monopolised all the 32

seats of Jammu. This time it has lost 5. But it is in terms of votes that its loss is more glaring. Its share in the total votes polled in the region declined from 74 percent in 1983 to 50.6 percent. Two senior leaders of the party, Trilochan Dutt and Dharampal were humbled by little known independents while the margin of victory of the winning members declined drastically.

The disillusionment of the voters with the alliance, particularly its major partner in the region viz the Congress, is apparent. But it does not mark a conspicuous gain for any other Party. The BJP, Jammu's main opposition, is a poor second, winning just two seats, with a margin of around 300 votes in both against nil in 1983 and got 12.60 percent votes against 8.12 percent four years ago.

In 1983, the Congress had worked on the fears of the voters of Jammu against domination by Kashmir through the National Conference. This time, it was instrumental in bringing that very party to power. Considering the fact that the Congress had vacated the entire ground of opposition politics the gains of the BJP and other opposition parties are negligible 20 out of 26 BJP candidates lost their deposit. 11 out of 19 candidates of the Panthers Party and 10 out of 11 candidates of the Janata party lost deposits while none of the two parties secured any seat.

Leaderless and Rudderless
The only party that registered a gain is the Bahujan Samaj Party which put up nine candidates, three of them secured the second position. However, it is not only the scheduled castes and some sections of the backward classes who responded to the caste appeal of the BJP, the voting behaviour of other sections of population in the whole region was also influenced by the caste factor as organised parties established their irrelevance.

For the same reason, independents nearly doubled their voting strength in between the two elections, from 14.67 percent in 1983 to 26.31 in 1987. They got more votes than all the opposition parties put together did. In fact their tally is larger than even the National Conference, which contested seven seats in the region as an ally of the Congress and polled 15.10 percent votes. For the first time three independents got elected. They got second position in as many as nineteen constituencies. While it is difficult to tell how many of them would have been elected if they were better equipped with resources and if their allegations of electoral malpractices were correct, the sizeable support that unorganised independents have secured indicate growing distrust of the people of the region in the existing parties and political leaders.

The election campaign in Jammu region was marked by lack of serious political issues, a clear focus and popular enthusiasm. While the ruling alliance divided the seats of the region amongst itself broadly

along communal lines, the communities, in turn, were divided caste wise, led as much by parties as independents.

Jammu thus emerged, after the elections, as a fragmented personality; leaderless and rudderless.

Stable, but...

As far as the stability of Farooq Government is concerned, the election results firmly ensure it. For out of 74 results declared so far the ruling alliance has won 64 seats; with no serious challenge in the remaining three constituencies. The opposition of ten members is evenly divided between the two regions. As dissent in Kashmir is represented by the four members of a party like the MUF, it is isolated not only from the rest of the country but also from Jammu and Ladakh regions. The two member BJP opposition in Jammu further eliminates scope for inter-regional or inter-communal coordination of dissent.

Again, with some repression and provocation, the Kashmir politics, with its fundamentalist and confrontationist tendencies, can be driven out of the system. In Jammu, the system is already a pale reflection of its politics.

All these factors undermine the prospects of consolidation of a constitutional opposition and ensure security of the regime. But what other outlets of popular discontent would seek? In what form Kashmiri aspirations would be articulated? How would vacuum in Jammu be filled? How long uninstitutionalised cultural diversities resist the fundamentalist waves?

How would a possible chain of communal backlash affect the stability of the state, if not of the government? How lasting and effective a bridge Farooq's personality, team and administration would be able to build over politically and emotionally splintered parts of the State?

Real Politik

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ceasefire held. But it was sabotaged on Easter Sunday by the massacre of Sinhalese passengers travelling in the eastern province in a bus, followed two days later by the explosion of a large bomb in Colombo's crowded bus terminal, in which outrage, several persons died and scores were injured. Although the Tigers denied responsibility the authorities put the blame on them and intensified attacks, including airstrikes, on their bases.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Premadasa, a confirmed hardliner, declared that his government would consider political discussions "only after peace was restored". The Colombo government had decided to capture the thickly populated Jaffna peninsula and give way to the demands of its hardliners. Important parts of the peninsula have been captured but the Tigers still control Jaffna city. Should the Tigers be eliminated and the Sri Lankan armed forces succeed in suppressing all the armed groups, their victory will remain pyrrhic, unless an honourable

political settlement is reached, for the island's economy is incapable of sustaining permanently the armed occupation of the Tamil areas.

There can be no doubt, however, that India's mediatory efforts failed due to the inflexibility of the Tigers and the incapacity of India's leaders to persuade them at the opportune moment to negotiate. In some sense this made the military operations inevitable, but the scale and intensity of the fighting and the number of civilian casualties, put Rajiv Gandhi's Government in an awkward situation. The need to keep Tamil public opinion mollified led to the fiasco of the relief boat convoy. The later need to save face, in the context of his domestic political troubles, perhaps explains Rajiv Gandhi's decision to paratroop relief supplies.

But this gesture, made as it was, for domestic consumption just before the vital Haryana assembly elections, cannot either induce the Tigers to negotiate or stop the Sri Lankan army from carrying out its plans. Fortunately military intervention is widely perceived in India as contrary to Indian national interest. Nevertheless ostentatious preparations have been made, for the practice of realpolitik seems to demand that Sinhalese chauvinists must not entirely rule it out. If there is a lesson to be learnt, it must surely be that lack of wisdom both about goals and the methods used to achieve them, are dangerous weaknesses in the practice of statecraft.

The Babri Masjid

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Such a course of action would be exceedingly dangerous for the peace and progress of the country and every attempt should be made by all right thinking people to see that the problem is not allowed to escalate. On the contrary, it is solved soon so that communal tension is not increased.

In order to study this question three of us, led by Lt. Gen. J.S. Arora (Retd.), Gurumukh Singh Jeet Secretary of the Sikh Forum, and myself went to participate in a conference in a town nearby. From there we went to Ayodhya and visited this temple along with several others. After meeting a large number of people and talking to them we have come to the conclusion that there is a solution to the problem. In a statement, which we issued soon after our return, we outlined our proposal. Briefly it is like this.

Our Proposal

One, the Hindu sentiment in relation to the Ram Janma Bhoomi is very deep and widespread. Lord Rama rules over the hearts of millions of people. They look upon him as their God and have feelings of deep adoration for him.

Nor should it be forgotten that the story of Rama has got deeply embedded in the Hindu mind. Except for the Semitic religions, others more or less accept the story as a part of the traditional mythology.

There is no such association of any Muslim prophet or holy man with the Babri Masjid. Historically speaking, this mosque has certainly been some kind of a milestone in the history of Islam in India but it would be difficult to say anything more than that.

In this situation it would be quite in order if the Muslims accepted the proposition that as a mark of their goodwill they would agree to the erection of the temple of Lord Rama there. If this can be done, it would be a deeply moving gesture by the Muslim community.

But the question arises: How to persuade the Muslims to take such a magnanimous view of things. At the moment they have a feeling of being persecuted. Insecurity is writ large on their face and the frequent communal riots that take place add to that insecurity and do not lessen it in any way.

More than that, certain Hindu organisations have already started talking in terms of liberating the temples of Lord Shiva in Kashi and Lord Krishna in Mathura. In other words, they would like the mosques in those places also to be demolished. According to widely circulated wild rumours, some people have a list of about 300 places of worship which according to them were forcibly converted into mosques, tombs and memorials in the Muslim period. This list, reportedly includes monuments like the Kutub in Delhi and the Taj Mahal in Agra.

Overcoming Fears

The Muslims fear therefore is that what is happening in Ayodhya is only the beginning of a certain process which will ultimately demoralise them, hurt their faith and unsettle them completely. In view of the various details mentioned above, these fears and misgivings are not unfounded and should be given due weightage.

Two the real solution to this problem would be that Hindus create a feeling of security and dignity in the minds of the Muslims and the Muslims in turn should make a gesture of relinquishing their claim on the Babri Masjid which may have some historical sanctity but has little religious sanctity behind it. This can however be done only if, as argued above, the Muslims are given a feeling that this is only one awkward situation that has arisen and may be sorted out in this manner. Should they continue to think, as they doubtless do now this is the thin end of the wedge, obviously this feeling of insecurity would not be overcome.

Not only should it be an understanding amongst representative groups of Hindus and Muslims it should also be fortified with a resolution by Parliament and a change of Statute which assures Muslims that the total situation is being frozen wherever it exists now and there is no question of seeking to unfreeze it on any pretext at any future date. Only some such formal assurance, backed by a constitutional undertaking, can help to overcome those fears in the minds of Muslims which haunt them today.

The Practice of Real Politik Sri Lanka and India's Domestic Politics

Karan Sawhny

There can be no doubt, however, that India's mediatory efforts failed due to the inflexibility of the Tigers and the incapacity of India's leaders to persuade them at the opportune moment to negotiate. In some sense this made the military operations inevitable, but the scale and intensity of the fighting and the number of civilian casualties, put Rajiv Gandhi's Government in an awkward situation. The need to keep Tamil public opinion mollified led to the fiasco of the relief boat convoy. The later need to save face, in the context of his domestic political troubles, perhaps explains Rajiv Gandhi's decision to paradrop relief supplies.

Until the summer of 1983 the Indian authorities were able to ignore Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, hoping perhaps, that it would be resolved by the parties themselves. But the politics of Tamil Nadu, riven as it was, and is, by the factional posturings of the rival DMKs, was bound to intrude, although the island's conflicts were reflected mostly in rhetoric in the assembly. At some point in that year, however, Mrs. Gandhi's Government decided that military pressure on the Jayewardene Government was required to induce it to bring about a political settlement in the decades old conflict. Sanctuary was offered to young Tamil militants, many of whom were subsequently trained in the use of modern weapons in well organised camps.

After the July 1983 riots which followed the killing of 13 soldiers in a bomb explosion, and the arrival of tens of thousands of refugees in Tamil Eelam (LTTE) who were even then the most powerful of the armed groups, and who claimed credit for the bomb explosion, were still a small group. Although they had grown in the previous two years the "boys", which they are no longer called, were widely regarded as a fringe group. A number of other groups also existed a common thread being a pronounced sympathy for Karl Marx's interpretation of history and analytical methods.

Mr. Parbhakaran, the youthful leader of the LTTE and a hero to the adolescents of Jaffna, who had according to legend personally organised the ambush which sparked off the July 1983 holocaust, stepped up recruitment and firmed up his links with the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M.G. Ramachandran, under whose protection he was now able to operate from India.

The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) previously the main political party of the Tamils came to be seen by the young Tamils as less and less relevant. Its leaders fled and were received in India. They demanded Indian intervention and lived off Indian largesse. Neither they nor their hosts anticipated that this would undermine the moderates.

demands for regional autonomy. And the militants, especially the Tigers, had their own plans. The conference was later described as "premature".

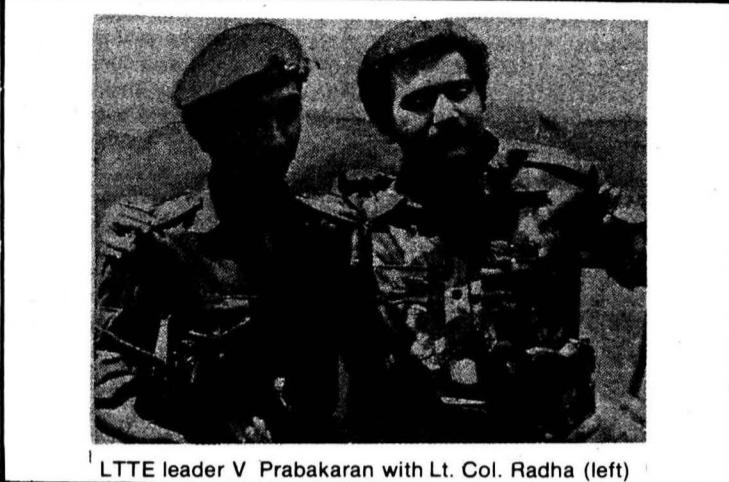
Indian pressure continued, with the management of the country's diplomacy now entrusted to the new Foreign Secretary, Mr. Venkateswaran, Mr. Natwar Singh and a bright young Minister from Tamil Nadu, Mr. Chidambaram. Meanwhile the "fringe" group—the Tigers—had grown into a powerful guerrilla force. In April-May 1986 they launched a sudden attack on their main rivals, -TELO- and killed its leader, Sabaratnam, and captured its weapons and fighters.

It was now in control of much of the northern province and its hold on the Jaffna peninsula was more or less absolute. Violent incidents had continued throughout the extended cease fire and from the beginning of 1986 they intensified. The Sinhala authorities had the choice of negotiating with the Tigers who, however, were not prepared to talk until their "legitimate national aspirations" were conceded, or with the now discredited TULF, whom the Indian Government continued to nurse. Indian pressure on Colombo continued and was buttressed by that of western aid donors, who not only had Tamil refugees on their doorsteps, but saw their donations being absorbed in the still rapidly growing military.

This led in June 1986 to the island government offering the Tamils provincial councils with considerable authority to deal with law and order and land settlement (which was an important step forward from the 1984 conference proposals). Another conference of all recognized political parties was convened and several rounds of talks were held in the summer and autumn of 1986 which brought about an agreement between the TULF and the Jayewardene government on almost all issues except the unification of the northern and eastern provinces. The Tigers whose arms dumps, supplies and leader Mr. Prabhakaran, were in India were persuaded "not to oppose the negotiations".

But it was clear that without their acquiescence no settlement could either be reached or implemented. The Indian government's leverage over them was constrained by the Congress (I) party's alliance with Mr. M.G. Ramachandran—the Tigers' patron in Tamil Nadu.

In November 1986, however, the SAARC summit in Bangalore catalysed the Indian authorities to disarming the militants, who had become a law and order problem even within Tamil Nadu. Leaders of some groups were taken into custody and Parbhakaran himself flown to Bangalore. Mr. M.G. Ramachandran now appeared willing to cooperate



LTTE leader V Prabhakaran with Lt. Col. Radha (left)

with the Central Government in order to put pressure on the militants. The Tigers received, loud and clear, the message of the SAARC summit with all its members pledging "not to allow their territories to be used by, rebel groups for activities against one another".

Not much came of the SAARC meetings or the attempts to pressure the Tigers and in December 1986 they carried out the liquidation of their remaining rivals. The Tamil Nadu authorities also back-tracked and the police chief who had organised the raids was sacked. This breathing space enabled Prabhakaran to remove himself and much of his equipment to Jaffna, where the Tigers had announced that they would set up a civilian administration from New Year's day 1987 a move the Sri Lankan authorities interpreted as a sort of creeping unilateral declaration of Independence.

Meanwhile the two Indian Ministers, Chidambaram and Natwar Singh, extracted on December 19, 1986 a promising concession from the Colombo Government, whereby they agreed to consider removing some areas with Sinhalese population in the eastern province, so that it would have a Tamil majority. The unification of the eastern and northern provinces would no longer be essential to the Tamils and the hardliners among the Sinhalese would be mollified. But the Tigers were not impressed.

Nevertheless in December 1986 it appeared that Indira Gandhi's strategy of putting military pressure on the Jayewardene Government, while at the same time promoting a political settlement between it and the TULF, had succeeded in creating a viable framework for a durable settlement. Even the Tiger's Northern Commander, was willing to accept a "reasonable settlement" provided a "Tamil homeland" in the North, at least, was conceded in principle. Ever since the Indian crackdown on the Tamil armed groups and the anger of India's Tamils towards the Tigers, following their liquidation of their rivals, their group too seemed more amenable.

But the arrival of Parbhakaran in Jaffna coupled

with the economic blockade and the launching of an offensive by the Sri Lanka armed forces in February completely changed the situation. The Tiger's spokesman who had boasted in December 1986 that "they were winning and saw no reason to negotiate", now began to talk of the effects of the blockade on Jaffna's women and children. The death toll mounted to 500 in February the highest in any month since the July 1983 massacres and the Indian government suspended its mediation in protest against the blockade and Colombo's pursuit of the military option. The Tigers now perceived their bargaining position as weak and rejected the Sri Lanka President's offer of a cease fire and a General Amnesty if they agreed to peace talks. Their foolish decision to take over the civil administration in Jaffna backfired and thousands of Tamils fled the peninsula, reversing the 1983 trend of Tamils trying to get away from the Sinhala areas.

Sri Lankan Strategy

The island's security forces made considerable progress in suppressing the militants in the eastern province having sought and got the help of both of western mercenaries and Militant survivors of the Tigers' liquidation efforts. Jayewardene informed the Indian Government that his forces would only stop military action if "the armed separatist cease armed violent operations and related military preparations" as well as stop interfering "with the legal administration of the area". It seemed that the Sri Lankan hardliners "two track strategy", of on the one side inching towards agreement with the now powerless moderate leaders and on the other conducting military operations to weaken the militants bargaining position, was at last succeeding.

All through March and early April military operations continued, bottling up the Tigers in Jaffna, which is joined to the rest of the island by a small neck of land called the elephant pass. Indian mediators again persuaded the Colombo Government into declaring a ten day cease fire effective from April 10, 1987 and preliminary to peace talks, if the

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